

THE VETERAN

OR,

MATRIMONIAL FELICITIES.

VOL. III.

Printed by Strahan and Spottiswoode,
Printers-Street, London.

THE VETERAN;

OR,

MATRIMONIAL FELICITIES.

A married life, to speak the best,
Is all a lottery contest ;
Man's an odd compound, after all,
And ever has been since the Fall ;
And though a slave in love's soft school,
In wedlock claims his right to rule.

COTTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN.

FATERNOSTER-ROW.

1819.

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275.	6. for <i>yesterday</i> read <i>to-day</i> .
276.	21. for <i>impressions</i> read <i>impression</i> .
278.	16. omit comma after <i>acrimony</i> , and insert it after <i>guests</i> .
310.	9. insert a comma after <i>of</i> .
341.	4. for <i>turning</i> read <i>turn</i> .

THE VETERAN ;
OR,
MATRIMONIAL FELICITIES.

CHAP. I.

Bait the hook well ; the fish will bite.
Much Ado about Nothing.

The Biter Bit.

WE earnestly hope our indulgent readers have not paid this our first effort for their amusement so bad a compliment, as to read it carelessly, in which case they will not have forgotten Miss Fenning, who once had the honour of presiding over the education of Lady Burford's daughter ; and who, — more assisted by the title and the splendour of her fine house, which dazzled Mrs. Barlow's understand-

ing, and captivated her judgment, than by the warmth of that lady's recommendation, — was afterwards the governess to the Misses Barlow, when we met them at Southampton, — the adviser of Mr. Lacket, — the besieger of the widower, — the companion and projector of the masquerade ; and, in short, the aider, inventor and abettor of all intrigue. She does not form the tamest picture of our matrimonial felicities.

Upon her dismissal from Mr. Barlow's, she received a sum larger than her just due ; and what would have been twice the salary of a gentlewoman, who had not had the honour of teaching Miss Burford ; but Miss Fenning quickly saw the consequence that gave her in Mrs. Barlow's eyes ; and she made her advantage of it. She doubled her terms ; and was not thought the worse of by that good lady, who made no secret of what she gave.

From Highgate, then, she bent her way to town, and took up her abode at her father's. We hardly dare to inform our readers where he lived, or what he was; but our strict impartiality, upon which we greatly pride ourselves, obliges us to adhere to truth, and to confess that the heroine of our present tale was the daughter of ———, a — hair-dresser — hair-cutter — wig-maker, &c. &c. &c.; and that he lived in the purlieu of Covent-garden. But this was a circumstance she took great care to hide; her letters were always addressed elsewhere; and when her brothers or sisters wrote, they were ordered to take their notes to some one to direct, and to seal them with wax and a seal, instead of their thimble, a key, a button, or a pin, which they had sometimes used with their wafers. But when she was independent, she had no wish for their correspondence; yet whenever she wanted a home, or was out of cash, she con-

descended to take up her abode in one of the attics in her father's house, sleeping three in a bed ; for he let all the rest of it, save the shop, to the subordinates of the theatre ; and we must acknowledge, however reluctantly, that Miss Fenning passed her earlier years in this school, where the foundation was laid for all her future proficiency and virtue.

It had always been the wish of her father and herself that she should play her part on that stage ; but Mr. Harris, blind to his own, and to the interest of the theatre, rejected her services without even one trial.

It does sometimes happen that we are short-sighted to what would benefit us ; if we could see, and would follow only what is good for us, no doubt we should be happier ; but so it was in this instance.

Her figure was low, and not very graceful ; and her voice, though quite loud enough, was not extremely melo-

dious ; but she did not perceive these defects, and was exceedingly irritated against the manager.

Mr. Fenning was quite at a loss what to do with his daughter : he had a large family ; and although he had business enough, he could not very readily get payment from those he worked for.

During the short peace, this “torturer of hairs” thought a journey to France would make his fortune, and that he should return the mirror of fashion ; and as he lay one night thinking of the means of putting this scheme in practice, his daughter came into his head ; if he could but make her speak French like a frenchified woman, and give her a little French smartness, she would be, fitted for the highest situations and the largest salaries ; for it was such an object to get a governess educated in France !

The next day he collected some of his debts, and away they went soon after.

Upon their arrival at Calais, Mr. Fen-

ning calculated his finances, and finding them not very abundant, he considered that it was quite useless going to Paris, either for fashion or education. Miss could learn French as well at Calais; and the dress of the ladies there would suit his purposes, as well as the first Parisian costume, — the style would be French; the articles he should purchase certainly made in France, and of French materials. He well knew, that when a shopkeeper tells his customer, that such a dress — such a hat — such a wig — we beg pardon, *head-dress*, is French, the purchaser instantly sets it down as Parisian. One would suppose there was no other place in the kingdom than Paris. The credulous, self-deceived customers, pay ten times the sum of the original cost; and flatter themselves they are arrayed in the very essence of Parisian costume. The French, perhaps by the same rule, adopt the fashions of the meanest shop at Dover, and fancy they

are well enough dressed for Lady Salisbury's conversaziones.

At a miserable little perruquier's, then, Mr. Fenning bought two or three head-dresses; and saw two or three têtes served up "in the first style of Parisian dressing;" and having gained all he wished, he began to think of returning to his old shop. But his old customers had now none of his thoughts,—he soared above them; and thought it should go hard, if he did not make his fortune. But his daughter had not made so great a proficiency in her calling, as her father; for though she had been in France a week, she hardly knew more of the language, than when she arrived there. What was to be done? The wife of the perruquier agreed to board her in her own house, where, as nothing but French was spoken, it was impossible, but that in the course of a month or two, she would speak that language so well, as nearly to forget her own; and

as for other accomplishments, her daughters were learning the guitar, and they might take lessons together. This promised all the father could wish ; but, alas ! here was another difficulty — the money for her board must be paid beforehand — Mr. Fenning had none : at last it was settled, that he should, with the first funds he could procure, send over muslins and chintzes to the amount agreed.

These things arranged, Mr. Fenning once more consigned himself to the briny flood, and arrived safely at his own shop : but he had amused himself, during his journey and voyage, in composing such an advertisement as would catch the eye. Many people puffed off having been in France, and bringing over French things ; but *he*, very sagaciously, determined to let the world know, by his language, that he really had been there : at the same time it was necessary to please the common as well as the learned people ; so,

after a great deal of perplexity, and of translating from M. Teller, Coiffeur, &c. &c. he sent the following beautiful

ADVERTISEMENT :

“ MR. FENNING,

Hair-Dresser, Wig-maker, and Perouqueer,

TO

SON ROYAL ALTESS THE PRINCE DE GALE,

AND

INVENTOR OF THE METALLIC COIF-FER,

Which, besides giving a grace inexpressible to the *contoor* of the *tete* is also *uniquis* for *le le-gerté*, has the honour to inform ladies, noble-men, and gentlemen of the *plus ho tong*, that he is just arrived *de Paris*, with the latest and most *nouveau* assortment of perukes, wigs, and *tirebouchongs*, that is, ringlets of every de-scription of *mode*, convenient to all visages and complexions: but, above all, he begs to recom-mend his elastic *coif-fer, metallic*, which has the *avantage* peculiar of resembling the *pot* or skin, a *commodité tout a fait extraordinaire*, and is of the *premier* or first importance to the health, keeping the *seige de tout le organs* of sense,

which is *sans* doubt the mirror of all sentiment and of all virtue, safe from the accidents which tender heads are subject to. •Mr. Fenning has the *honour supreme* of assuring ladies, nobility, and gentlemen, who will condescend to felicitate him with their patronage, that he is so confident of his proficiency, that if they will favour him with one single trial, he is certain of their future attention.

“ No. —, — — Street, Covent Garden.”

Mr. Fenning and his iron *coiff* waited in vain at the door of his shop to number the carriages which he expected his unique advertisement would bring to him. None of the nobility came the first day—it was too soon, they could hardly have had time to read the delicious morsel of composition. The next day his own head was, on the outside at least, in exact order according to the “ Parisian costume :” his metallies and tirebouchons, that is, ringlets, were displayed to the greatest advantage ; but, alas ! nobody came to purchase them ; and at the end of a week he foresaw that

he should only have the expense for his pains. But no doubt the fault was in the place he lived, — nobody liked to buy any thing out of St. James's; and the poor man was forced to work as hard as a galley slave to make up for his loss.

In the meantime, his daughter was in a charming school to improve and confirm her in that code of morality she had learnt from the theatrical drudges, whose immaculate characters were not very strictly enquired into by Mr. Fenning when he let his lodgings: he thought of his large family, and the duty imposed upon him of providing for them, therefore his first care was after the money.

“ Get money — money still;
Let virtue follow — if she will.”

Miss Fenning did not want abilities, and she soon learnt the execrable French they spoke at Calais, and longed to show her improvements to her admiring friends in London; and to say truth, the perruquier's wife wanted, or rather longed to

see the muslins she was promised for Miss's board. Miss wrote to her father, and was answered, that he could send her no money, but that she must make her way over if she could, and *as* she could; and for the muslins, he learnt that the Custom-house officers were now so much upon the alert, that it was next to an impossibility to smuggle them over; but he expected some friends of his would be going in a few weeks, and by them they surely should be sent. This, however, did not satisfy the lady, and she threatened to send Miss adrift if she was not paid somehow: and no doubt she would have put her threat in execution, if Miss Fenning had not been beforehand with her.

There was a serjeant of an English regiment who frequently came to have his queue tied at the shop, with whom Miss Fenning made acquaintance, which soon became a strong flirtation. She took an opportunity of telling him her situation,

and the indignity with which she was treated, and the insult threatened her. The man, good-naturedly compassionating her situation, told her he should sail for England on such a day, and if she would go with him he would call for her. Miss returned, that she feared if any one

pected her, they would not let her take her trunk ; and she had made some acquisitions since she had been at Calais which she should not like to lose. How she came by them we do not enquire ; assuredly she could not have bought them, for her father had very little money to leave her after paying for his head-dresses, tirebouchons, &c. &c.

The man, beguiled no doubt by her eloquence, assisted her to get these things secretly from the house ; and all things being in readiness, she was to meet him at a particular spot. She was very punctual to her appointment—not so the youth.—She waited a long while, even until the packet was under weigh, in

vain — the serjeant and her clothes were hid, as she believed, from her sight for ever. She knew his name, but of his regiment she had not the least idea. She could not go back to the hair-dresser's, because she feared being charged with what she could not very well deny ; and this desertion of her swain, which she looked upon as the heaviest affliction, was certainly the only thing that saved her.

The hair-dresser's wife soon missed Miss Fenning ; the house was searched for her, but she was no where to be found. It instantly occurred to the good woman, that she had eloped with the serjeant, and she began to think it was a good riddance. Half an hour afterwards her husband came home, and she told him of what had happened. He blamed her, as all other men do their wives when any thing happens wrong in their absence ; but she, like all other wives, had influence enough to persuade him to

think as she did, and he was ready enough to do it: but at last he asked her if she missed any thing? This was, indeed, a word to the wise. She hastened to examine her goods and chattels, and, to her great dismay, all her finery, her lace caps, hat all, all disappeared, together with some rings, &c. &c.; and, we suppose, it was to these Miss Fenning alluded, when she spoke of the acquisitions she had made at Calais. The Frenchman, all on fire, swore, *parbleu!* he would find her, and make her refund. • For this purpose he went to the quay, just as the packet was setting sail; but he determined not to let his victim escape, so on board he went, and was very near being taken to Dover. He saw all the passengers, and amongst the rest the serjeant, of whom he enquired for Miss Fenning. The man declared, with great truth, he had not seen her since he called in the morning to take leave of his wife and family; and, upon examination, finding

she was not on board, he, with true French civility, believed him. In great disappointment, he made the best of his way home ; but he resolved to watch every packet that sailed, doubting not the young lady would bend her course to England.

CHAP. II.

He wears his faith but as the fashion of his
Hat ; it ever changes with the next block.

Much Ado about Nothing.

Life without love, is earth without a sun.

The Inconstant.

MISS Fenning was now in a very deplorable situation ; but wit, we are told, is better than house and land. After having waited till she was aware the things she had *borrowed* must be missed, and that she herself would be in danger, she went to the Kingston hôtel *, the owner of which was an Englishman, and particularly attentive to his countrymen and women. She made up a pitiable story of her being robbed, and left with-

At that time the best hotel in Calais.

out friends ; and she invented it so plausibly, and Mr. Davies had so little time to investigate the truth of it, that he told her he would try to do something for her. It happened, very opportunely, that an English family arrived that very night at the hotel : one of the ladies appeared in very delicate health, and wanted a sort of attendant who spoke French, and would act in the capacity of lady's maid. Upon stating these her wishes to the host, he directly introduced Miss Fenning ; and so exactly did she appear to answer to the wishes of the lady, that she was engaged immediately to attend them to Paris, and a small sum advanced to procure her necessaries, in the place of those clothes of which she had been robbed. The next morning, very early, they left Calais, to the extreme gratification of the young lady.

It was in this service she became acquainted with the great ladies whose

histories she loved to entertain Mrs. Barlow with, and which that lady swallowed so greedily ; but it was observed, that Miss Fenning never liked to brag of her acquaintance with these grandees before general company ; nor did she care to speak much of Paris, excepting where she believed she was safe from detection : of course she never knew, or at least recollected, any thing of Calais, except that it was so horrible a place, that nobody of any respectability could possibly stay there a day.

The party consisted of two gentlemen and two ladies ; Sir George Freeman, his wife, and his sister ; and a young man, Mr. Belmont, an intimate friend.

Sir George, alas ! was not the most constant husband in the world. His sister used to say of him, “ Put a cap upon a broomstick, and I will venture to say George will make love to it.”

Lady Freeman was a very excellent and a very domestic woman ; but the last

woman upon earth to reclaim a truant husband. Unfortunately, she was fond of him, and, of course, very much alive to all his slidings in this way : and fretting had done her health so much injury, that she was now quite an invalid.

Sir George, although verifying Miss Freeman's assertion, kept terms and appearances with the world. He was a good-natured, thoughtless man ; and had his wife yielded a little to his love of pleasure, and engaged in it herself, so much as to accompany him, possibly she might, if any body might, keep him in decent order ; but when he left her, she always enquired, upon his return, where he had been. As the whole history of this pair, however, demonstrates one species of our Matrimonial Felicities, and may be entertaining, we beg our reader's attention to it.

Miss Holcroft was highly connected, and the only daughter of her father, who

lived at a very pretty place in Nottinghamshire. Sir George Freeman was colonel of a militia regiment that was quartered at that place. Novelty was his rage, and he fell desperately in love with Miss Holcroft—she distractedly so with him. No doves were ever so fond—no hearts ever so sincere. Three or four billets-doux passed each day, and yet every day they met. One would really wonder what they could have to say in so much writing—such frequent meetings! Mr. Holcroft was much engaged with his hounds, and never gave himself the trouble to consider with whom his daughter walked, or who were her visitors. “The girl knew he would not let her marry a man who was not rich,” or a “man who was in the army:” but this was only a militia regiment.

After a term of two months’ billing and cooing, Sir George wrote to request the pleasure of speaking to Mr. Holcroft.

“What the devil can he have to say

to me?" said he to his daughter, who felt that her happiness, if not her existence, depended upon the result of the conversation; "Eh, Bess! what can he have to say to me? Why, what's the matter, child, you look like the moon through a cloud! Why, surely, he don't mean to ask my consent, does he?" said he, struck with an idea which any other man would have imbibed six weeks before; "'cause, if he does, he may save himself the trouble."

"Oh, my dear father!" exclaimed Miss Holcroft, "have some pity upon your poor daughter; think that her happiness in this world is at stake—think—"

"Think nonsense," interrupted her unceremonious father: "I know what is best for you, and you shan't have him, so you may make up your mind to it;" and saying this, he rose in anger, and went to give orders that, if Sir George called, he was out with his daughter.

The baronet followed his messenger,

like an endorsement at the back of a bill : he galloped round the sweep, speeded by love, hope, and anticipation, and, beyond these, by a good horse. He saw his dulcinea at the window, and was therefore exceedingly surprised at the denial. He went home, and instantly wrote to Mr. Holcroft the purport of his visit. That gentleman immediately answered decidedly in the negative, but without assigning any reason for so doing. Sir George felt himself exceedingly nettled, but he had now been constant two months, so he shortly afterwards left Nottingham and Miss Holcroft

— in her tears,
And dried not one of them with his comfort.

Two years afterwards he met the young lady at a ball at Brighton; and she was near fainting at the sight of him ; but he had almost forgotten her very person ; yet he was a very vain man, and had no objection that a handsome young woman should show such an affection

for him ; so he danced with her, and made an appointment to meet her the next day, when she renewed her expressions of happiness at seeing him again.

Sir George, although not much given to return to his old flirts, had no affair upon his hands just now ; but he felt none of the ardour of his first devotion to her. He told her very plainly that he had loved twenty fair ladies since he saw her ; but that he never had been so constant as he was during the time they cooed together ; and that if she felt her happiness depended upon becoming his wife, and she was contented with what he told her of his affection, he was willing to marry her.

Miss Holcroft, relying upon the potency of her own charms to secure him if once she married him, gladly accepted the offer. He, however, made over to her the task of soliciting her father's consent ; saying, that nothing could ever make him condescend to request it a

second time, after the treatment he had received.

Miss Holcroft sorrowfully confessed that, if their marriage depended upon her father's approbation, it would never take place, for that he had refused to hear her whenever she began to speak upon the subject.

“What then,” asked Sir George, “do you propose to do?”

The lady was silent.

“My dear Bess,” said he, “my fortune is not large, and by no means what it was — I cannot make the two ends meet now; what then could I do to support a wife in the elegance you have been used to?”

“Oh,” said the tender-hearted fair, “a very little would suffice me, if I lived with you; every wish I have is centered in that: besides, I am my father's only child, and it is impossible he will refuse to give me a fortune, when

he sees me your wife, and opposition useless."

"What, then ! you wish a private marriage ?" asked he, 'as if he had no great mind to the feast.

"I see no other means," sighed the lady ; and after half an hour's conversation, wherein he told her of his debts, &c. such a scheme was determined upon ; — the marriage took place.

The lady, according to constant usage, wrote a letter, which would have melted ice itself.

But her father was flint itself ; so he answered her in the trite, and exceedingly home-spun phrase, of "where you bake, there you may brew ;" and these words constituted the whole of the letter, excepting the signature.

What a brute he must have been ! Again, and again, she wrote, and looked in vain for an answer. That was the last time she ever saw her father's handwriting, addressed to herself.

It was now necessary to be very economical. Lady Freemail proved herself what she avowed she would be, — quite happy with him, and contented with little of worldly goods.

They now joined his regiment, in which he was universally beloved for his good-nature and gentlemanly conduct : but his wife began to be envious of his brother officers, who engrossed too much of his attention from her : what then was her consternation, and horror, when she suspected he visited other women ? — The woman with whom she lodged in the country-town where they were quartered, was good enough to give her the first hint of his gallantry, which, when once imbibed, soon grew into jealousy.

With the assistance of this agent, she found out his haunts ; taxed him with his inconstancy ; cried, sobbed, fainted.

At first, the culprit was repentant : — distressed to give any one uneasiness,

he soothed her, owned his error, swore it should be the last, and it was all made up : but her suspicions were not to be lulled. For some days after, he never was allowed to stir without her : and after that, she made him tell her every place he had been to, giving him reason to believe, from her nicety in calculating the time, that she suspected the truth of what he said. His good temper put up with this for a week or so ; but then he became quite tired, and played truant, while she pined at home.

The officers had bespoken a play, to which, of course, they all went ; and each begged the presence of their acquaintance, so as to fill the house.

Lady Freeman refused to go, after some quarrel with her husband. He made it his request, that she would attend it “ to oblige him ;” but women can be obstinate as well as men ; and he went without her.

As soon as he was gone, this impru-

dent woman called upon a friend, as preconcerted ; — for she did not like to affront the corps, though she wished to mortify her husband, — and absolutely went with her to the theatre. It was late ere they entered, but her friend had secured the box. Lady Freeman was no sooner seated, than, casting her eyes to the upper boxes, she there saw Sir George talking quite familiarly with the very woman she dreaded. He saw her too, and for once his temper was roused, and he determined to pay her in her own coin ; so he pretended not to observe her, although she knew that he had, and sat still by the side of the frail one. Her ladyship burst into tears, which soon became hysterics ; she made a great noise, and was taken home.

Sir George stayed for some time, he dreaded going home, for he knew there must be a scene awaiting him, and so there was ; — she upbraided him with his licentiousness, — he quarrelled

with her for her imprudence, swore he would be tied to no wife's apron-string ; and that if she could not be content to live with him discreetly, upon his own terms, he was willing to allow her half his income, rather than be subject to her eternal suspicions.

Parting was by no means in the lady's calculation, — she loved her husband to distraction, so she cooled as soon as possible, and asked no more questions for many days ; but she could not help setting spies upon him.

Just at this time, when they had been some two years married, she received the news of her father's death, and that he had left her forty thousand pounds ; but so closely tied up, that Sir George could not finger a guinea of it.

As soon as he knew it, he again very handsomely offered to separate, instead of sharing her wealth. She was overcome by his disinterestedness, saved her money and paid his debts ; but would never listen to a separation.

During the short peace, Lady Freeman thought a change of air would be of use to her health, and requested him to go abroad with her.

Sir George had no sort of objection, and they set off, accompanied, as we have before observed, by Miss Freeman and a friend of her husband's.

CHAP. III.

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet, are
Of imagination all compact.

Mid. Night's Dream.

The Elucidation of the Broomstick.

ON their journey to Dover, Lady Freeman had food enough for her jealousy, for she caught her maid and Sir George talking upon the landing-place at an inn ; and having sworn she was “ a charming creature,” the audacious wretch had the effrontery to kiss her. This was too much, Lady Freeman called her up soon after, paid her her wages, and sent her off.

She was therefore, glad to secure so prudent, and so very respectable a young woman as Miss Fenning at Calais. She gave her a seat in the inside the

carriage ; and was so much satisfied with the modesty of her manner towards Sir George, — for Miss Fenning could assume all shapes, — that in time she made her her confidant. She could not possibly have had a worse.

Sir George, to whom novelty was much more than beauty, soon came to an understanding with Miss Fenning, who very honourably exposed all his wife's secrets to him.

Soon after their arrival in Paris, Miss Fenning asked leave to go to Versailles with an acquaintance, and having obtained it, she went to hire a cabriolet.

She asked the man what he would charge, he answered fifteen francs, — but she was quite up to the imposition ; she had not lived in the house of the perruquier for nothing ; so she left him and went to the next, who seeing the ill-success of the other, asked only ten francs, to which Miss Freeman agreed, and desired him to draw up to such a

place, in order to do which, she must pass by the first man. As she did so, he put his face under her bonnet, and said, "Got tam de Bifteck et les pommes de terre."

Our heroine took no notice, but passed to the spot, and took up Sir George according to assignation ; and upon her return home, she was adorned with a brooch, necklace, and ear-rings, which she often bragged to Mrs. Barlow, were presents to her from her dear friend Lady Freeman.

Miss Fenning had the impudence to sport these fine ornaments in that lady's presence. Where could they come from ? Miss Fenning was destitute when she took her, had been robbed of all she possessed, and Lady Freeman had advanced her a small sum, to get what was absolutely necessary for the journey ; but what could not half purchase one of these things : she must therefore certainly have other resources ; yet Miss Fenning

had always appeared so exceedingly modest and reserved before her, that much as she was given to suspect her husband, she could not believe her so deceitful.

She went to Miss Freeman, and consulted her upon the subject: that young lady had no doubt of the fact, but she always made as light of these things as possible; and tried to make her sister-in-law indifferent to the misconduct of her husband; and this she thought was her only hope of comfort; for of Sir George's reformation, she had not the slightest idea. When, therefore, her ladyship asked her opinion, she answered, "I have no doubt but that your suspicions are correct, and that my incorrigible brother is guilty: he'll never mend, so make up your mind to be thankful he is so general a lover. In all his intrigues, you never knew him constant to one object a month together; this will have its day, and then

there will be a successor, and so on to the end of the 'chapter ; but pray don't try to scold him out of it, for that's impossible to effect ; it only sours him."

" But is it not shocking, my dear Georgiana," said the desponding wife, " to allow a man to lead such a dissipated life, independent of the misery it causes me ?"

" O, very shocking, indeed," returned Miss Freeman, " if you come to the morality of it ; but as no sermons upon this text will have any weight with him, suppose we try to ridicule him out of it : you know my idea of a cap and a broomstick, let us follow it up."

Accordingly, these ladies took a bolster, at one end of which they placed a large bonnet, a great many furbelows round the neck, and a *redingote* folded round the body, and plenty of flounces upon the petticoat under it. — Thus dressed out, the whole was covered with a flowing shawl, which concealed all de-

fects; and when perfect, our ladies laughed so immoderately, as to be unable to proceed. However, after indulging in this way for some minutes, the thing was very gracefully reclined upon a sofa, — a pretty little shoe peeping beneath the flounce, — where it really made so good an appearance, that more fastidious persons than the Baronet might have been taken in.

Close to Lady Freeman's bed-room was a kind of boudoir, which communicated by glass-doors with both hers and Miss Freeman's chamber.

This room was fitted up with all sorts of lounging chairs, sofas, &c. &c., and it was here the object was laid.

While the servants were removing the dinner things, — for Lady Freeman's health would not allow of her dining at a restaurateur's, — she said to her footman, “I expect a dress-maker this evening; you need not bring her in here, but show her to the boudoir.”

“Very careful, indeed, madam,”

thought Sir George, "that is because I should not see her."

Miss Freeman had given Mr. Belmont his instructions, according to which he took the Baronet out for a walk, and brought him back about seven o'clock, quite accidentally, thinking that the ladies might like to go to some public place.

Sir George went to seek his wife ; not finding her in the drawing-room, he went to her bed-room, and that being vacant, he tried to open the door of the boudoir, which, however, resisted his efforts, for it was bolted in the inside ; but the curtain which screened the glass of it was a little undrawn, and gave to his imagination the figure of a woman sleeping.

He looked again, it was neither his wife, his sister, or Miss Fenning, but no doubt much better than all these put together.

"A perfect Venus, by Jove !" said he ; "the dress-maker, no doubt ! No

wonder my wife was so afraid of her. Faith, my dear, I'm very glad to see you. D——n the lock, I can't undo it, although the key is here; how provoking! Why she seems to sleep, as if in spite! For your mind, sleep on, my love! I'll soon find means to awaken you, I warrant; and be with you instantly."

Saying this, he darted through his sister's room; and, happy man! the communicating door between her bed-room and the boudoir was open.

It was now nearly dusk; he entered, and gently drew towards the beautiful object of his wishes.

He stood before it, contemplating the graceful form, and thought no women in the world knew how to attract but the French. However, he was of so happy a disposition, that he contrived to think the same of the women of every nation he visited.

Over head and ears in love, he meant to snatch a kiss of what ought to have

been a face ; he sprang forward, and caught the lovely object in his arms.

At that moment, a violent laugh from the other end of the room, and the discovery he had otherwise made, gave him fully to understand the hoax which had been played upon him.

At first, he was somewhat disconcerted ; but he was thoroughly good-tempered, so he joined in the laugh, and swore it was very well got up ; but he tried to make them believe he was aware of the deception.

‘ This farce, however, could not have been performed without Miss Fenning’s knowledge ; and that young lady, having already some suspicion that he slighted her for others, took the liberty of being jealous too ; she was therefore not sorry to put him to the test, and upon the first opportunity, she had the effrontery to call him to an account for this instance of his treachery.

Sir George, however, was a veteran

in this service, so he gave her to understand he was to throw the handkerchief where, and at whom he chose.

This did not suit the lady, and she determined she would be revenged; and she had the infamy to watch the Baronet, and take all the tales she could collect to her mistress.

For some time Lady Freeman took this as a proof of the damsel's innocence, but Miss Freeman had no jealousy to bias her judgment, and she instantly suggested the probability of the truth, and determined to sift her brother.

She told him of the spy Miss Fenning had set to watch him, and her own suspicions, that such activity on the part of that lady could not entirely arise from curiosity, for that she was certain her sister-in-law had never been privy to it.

“Curse the jade,” said Sir George, “why she herself is not a jot behind her neighbours in virtue.”

This was enough for Miss Freeman,

who immediately went to her sister, and showed her how impolitic it was to receive such communications, or to encourage the least idea of the kind in her attendants.

The damsel was called up, her salary paid, and she dismissed; but she flattered herself she would have ample retaliation. She way-laid Sir George, and tried to engage his attention, but she did not succeed; her turn was gone by, and he engaged in other pursuits.

She tried many expedients to attach herself elsewhere, but she found people rather shy of taking her without a character, so she began once more to think of her father; and as she had some money in her pocket, and Lady Freeman had trebled the loss of her wardrobe, in what she gave her of her own cast-off clothes, she found her way once more across the Channel, and very unexpectedly presented herself at the door of her father's shop; and it was lucky

for her that she returned so speedily, for the war broke out, and all the English were seized.

Sir George and his lady, however, went to Italy, and thus escaped this evil, and we have since heard that he said, “ of all women in the world, the Italians were the most attractive.”

Miss Fenning had taken care, upon her return to her father's house, to put on her most showy clothes, and the *friseur* judging of the weight of her purse by that criterion, received her with open arms; and he showed the benefit of his French trip, by his politeness in making no impertinent enquiries of the past; but he told her, their Calais friend had made a great fuss, and had even accused her of some unpleasant things, but that he had no doubt it was their anger at losing her without payment. He thought she had acted very wisely in taking a national leave, as he could not pretend

to say when he may be in cash enough to remit.

When, however, the hair-dresser found that Miss was come to take up her abode with him, his extreme politeness somewhat subsided, and he took the liberty of asking after the state of her purse.

Choosing to keep all she had to herself, she said it was very low ; and now the father again set his wits to work to find out how to dispose of his daughter.

She had certainly got up as much French as to talk fluently ; and as at that time, emigrations were by no means numerous, few were qualified to detect the badness of her language, or the vulgarity of her pronunciation.

Again he tried his genius at composition in the shape of an advertisement, and thought his daughter very fastidious, when she rejected, what he believed a masterpiece. We are half inclined to give it our readers, but fear to pall their

appetite with too many good things of the same kind.

Miss Fenning tried her skill, and pleased herself better.* It was not, to be sure, the most modest advertisement in the world, but she committed no glaring impropriety.

Soon afterwards, answers flocked in from all quarters. One would really have thought, that a lady just arrived from Paris, must be something quite out of the common course of events; she had one application from a school at Exeter, another from York, ten from the city, and twenty from the west end of the town.

She carefully kept them all; thinking they might probably be useful to her in days to come, and waited upon Lady Burford as the highest of her applicants.

She found her alone; and upon some minute interrogations of that lady, she answered that she was brought up a gentlewoman, but that her father's cir-

cumstances not being adequate to the expense of a large family, she had voluntarily offered to go out, to which he reluctantly assented; and to fit her for a situation such as she was now seeking, her father had 'himself' taken her to France, and placed her in one of the best situations in Paris, in the Rue St. Honoré, where she stayed at a great expense; that when her education was completed, she had the great good fortune to be introduced to Sir George and Lady Freeman, with whom she travelled, and who kindly desired her to make their house her home, until she found an opportunity of returning to England, which she did.

It happened that the lady she addressed was well known to Lady Freeman, and that they were upon visiting terms; she therefore questioned her very closely, and her answers were so full and satisfactory, that she could have no doubt of what she said.

Lady Burford said that it happened unfortunately that Sir George's family had, she understood, left Paris for Italy; and that, in the present state of things, it was next to an impossibility getting a letter conveyed and an answer returned; but if she would give her a reference in England, she would apply there.

Miss Fenning found this as great a difficulty as a letter from Italy.—She said her father was in town, but that she herself being a stranger, she had no reference: any letter, however, sent to Mrs. Llangwillan, Llangwillan Castle, Cardiganshire, would be sure to be answered to her satisfaction.—Reader, we really must stay a moment to admire Miss Fenning's ready invention: nobody could have doubted the existence of this lady in the Welsh castle; she started up so naturally, so instantaneously, that the imagination instantly painted a venerable old dowager, of an ancient family, re-

siding in her own still more ancient and venerable castle.

Such was Lady Burford's idea ; and the plausibility of the young lady was so great, that she desired a day or *two* to consider of it.

Miss Fenning answered, it was her wish to engage immediately, as her father was kept in town at an inconvenient expense ; and that her applications and answers to her advertisements were so numerous, that she had no doubt, considering her abilities and advantages, of an instant engagement. 'She added, that salary was not so much an object, as the respectability of the situation ; and that a hundred a year would satisfy her for the first year, as Miss Burford was such a child. Miss Fenning, however, condescended to go for eighty pounds ; but Lady Burford was too well educated herself, and too exemplary a mother, not to superintend the education

of her only daughter: and she shortly discovered so much ignorance in Miss Fenning, that she was soon told her services would be dispensed with, but that she might remain where she was until she had another situation; and, upon Mrs. Barlow's application, her ladyship was by no means averse from giving her such a character as suited that lady, who luckily was not a very deep investigator.

CHAP. IV.

I am bold to show myself a forward guest within your house.

Taming of the Shrew.

A Marriage.

Miss Fenning's history, previous to our first introduction, being thus known to us, we see her now again cast upon her own hands at her father's. She feared the character Mrs. Barlow would give of her would not be very favourable to any farther speculation in the private governess way; but she knew full well the advantage she possessed in her Parisian education, and that schools would be happy to get her with or without a recommendation. She therefore wrote to the Exeter lady who had answered her advertisement, and offered herself upon very high terms.

Miss Fenning had now seen a little of

the world, and was well aware that modesty was a very unprofitable commodity. It was also quite foreign to her disposition.

The lady answered by the return of post, that such a salary was out of the question, one half being the outside they (her sister and herself) could afford to give.

This was better than hoped for; and Miss Fenning returned, that London disagreed so much with her health, that she would not dispute about the terms; and as to the reference to Mrs. Barlow, or Lady Burford, the former was so exceedingly illiterate, her recommendation could do her no honour; and as Lady Burford had been troubled 'once, she would wish to save her future applications.

The Exeter ladies knew the folly of the age, and thought the report of having a lady brought up and educated in Paris, would bring them scholars from all parts: and so it did, for Miss Fenning went,

and the house filled quickly. She gave herself great airs ; took the liberty of finding fault with the clumsiness of an English dancing-master ; and, in short, she admitted nothing to be right but herself.

The ladies put up with it all ; but the young lady, like many others, could not live without “ an affair.” — She paid her court to two daughters of a rich widower, who lived in the neighbouring county ; and she did it so successfully, that they were permitted by the father to invite her home at the holidays, which he thought would be of great use to them in all respects, and leave him to his bottle as much as he pleased.

Miss was enchanted, and gladly accepted the invitation. In due time the carriage came, and the three friends arrived at Sunderly, where Mr. Kinderton received his daughters and Miss Fening with as much pleasure as his soddened senses could be sensible of.

He was about sixty years of age, cor-

pulent, red-faced, and boisterous. His temper was violent in the extreme; and when drunk for three or four days together, he was absolutely mad.—He once ordered his cook to be called up at one o'clock in the morning to dress him a beef-steak, and when it came, he swore at her, while he threw the savoury morsel in her face.—He charged one of his servants with an intention to murder him, and had him taken up; yet, mad as he was, he was never so incapacitated but that he could cast up a sum, or settle the most intricate account, without making the slightest error. Now and then, however, he could be gentlemanly; and he paid his daughters the compliment of being sober for three days after their arrival, in which time Miss Fenning took care to introduce herself to his good graces: the fourth day, however, he made himself amends, by getting what is called *royally* drunk:—why so denominated, I could never find out. At this

time he turned out all his servants, because, he said, they were all in league to cheat him—and most likely he was right;—swore the water was smoked that made his toddy, and threw the jug and its scalding contents at the butler—for Miss Kinderton had let in the servants the minute after her father had turned them out.

Miss Fenning, whom no difficulties could appal when her interest was at stake, undertook the arduous task of taming this bear; and she set about it with the skill of a good leader.

After dinner, instead of leaving him, the ladies sat with him, and when he had helped himself to a full tumbler of grog, one of them would draw off his attention, while another took the full glass, and presented one half empty: and when he was going too far, they filled up the bottle of spirits with water; but this was only when he was in such a state as not to know whether he drank brandy or water.

In this way they kept him comparatively sober, and he was tolerably good-tempered. In the course of a fortnight Miss Fenning was a “d——d clever woman;” at the end of the month she was a “d——d smart, handsome lass;” and one fortnight more brought him to the place she longed to see him — at her feet.

The girls were not quite pleased, because all girls have a horror of a mother-in-law from their infancy. However, Miss Fenning was so dotingly fond of them, that, if their father must marry at all, she would be better than any other person.

Preliminaries were soon adjusted. The bride elect *had* given a hint of settlements; but that was instantly negatived, and she almost regretted she had given it. — He told her, as she had not a penny, none could be settled upon her.

The Exeter ladies were apprised of what was going forward, and that their scholars would stay at home the next

quarter for the sake of the wedding, which took place in due form, two months after the first introduction of the happy pair.

All passed off tolerably well until quarter-day, when the young ladies went to school, to the dissatisfaction of their father, who told his wife she ought to do something for her board and the comforts she enjoyed ; but Mrs. Kinderton soon let him know that she was his wife, and quite independent of any avocation of that kind.

This was their *first* quarrel, and he took to his old consoler, the bottle, which did not sweeten his temper ; but they were a perfect match for each other.

Some time after, a dispute arising in the parish about the right of a path-way through his grounds, he was obliged to go to London. His wife had a great ambition to show her grandeur to her father, and brothers and sisters ; but she had not yet prepared her husband for his

new relations. She probably thought it was time enough, and that it might be possible to keep him in ignorance of their situation in life.

When she proposed accompanying him, he said "it was an unnecessary expense; besides, there were females enough to be had there to nurse him, if he wanted one." But she persisted, and of course gained her point.

When they arrived in town, Mrs. Kinderton wished to go to an hotel; but her husband had always gone to the same lodgings in Norfolk-street, and there he would go now. It was rather too much in the vicinity of her old haunts; but she could not help it. She sent a note to her father, schooling him into forgetfulness of the shop, and into remembrance of his best manners and gentility; and desired he would drill a little spice of it into her brothers and sisters before they came to see her.

Accordingly, two or three visits were

paid, and all went on to her satisfaction. The wig and the coif-fer were all forgotten ; and the old gentleman was so good-tempered, that his father-in-law began to think whether or not he should ask him for the loan of a little money. — But, alas ! all things pass away, and so did his good temper.

Mr. Fenning had dined by invitation with his son-in-law, who began to think, from the deference and attention he paid to him, that he was a d——d sensible man ; and he appeared in high good-humour.

Mrs. Kinderton being engaged to go with some of her former friends to the theatre, whom she was to call for in her own carriage, had left the two gentlemen for that purpose. After extolling the good drink, and bragging how hale a man he was who could drink so many glasses, of it, Mr. Kinderton said he did not find his health impaired by it in the least ; and that the only symptom of

approaching age he found was, that his hand shook, and he could not very well shave himself; but that barbers in general were such filthy beasts, and breathed in his face so much, that he could not bear them.

“My dear sir,” said his obsequious father-in-law, “I shall be happy to do it for you.”

“Thank you, thank you, sir,” said the husband; “but I could not give you that trouble, for I like to be shaved every day; and besides, I must go to some hair-dresser, for my head is getting bald and I’m thinking of getting a wig. My neighbour Sir Robert ——”

“My dear sir,” interrupted the per-ruquier, (totally forgetting his daughter’s admonition in his thirst of gain,) “I’ll make you one, — I make them better than any one in London.”

“The Devil you do,” said Mr. Kinderton, not at all understanding him. “What! I suppose you make ’em out of

your worsted \stocking, — ‘ A cap by night, a stocking all the day,’ — eh ?”

“ No, no, my dear friend,” returned the greedy friseur ; “ I mean to say, I make wigs.” And, willing to puff himself off to the greatest advantage, proceeded, in the language of his advertisement, to assure him he was hairdresser and perruqueer to Son Royal Altess the Prince de Gale.

“ Queer enough,” thought the old man, in perfect astonishment, opening his eyes and his mouth as if he could not believe his ears, while the inventor of the *coif-fer* went on enumerating his accomplishments. But his patience being exhausted, he interrupted him with “ D—n your *commodité* and your metallic *coif-fer* : — I wish to the Lord it had been made into a straight waistcoat for me before I ever married your daughter. But your gibberish aside, — answer me one question, are you a barber, or are you not ?”

“ Sir,” answered the friseur, who was

now on his hobby-horse, and pursuing his dear advertisement, “it keeps the seige of tous le organs of sense and ——” But seeing his auditor getting into a rage, and a horsewhip near at hand, he recollected himself, and assured Mr. Kinderton, if he would let him take the measure of his head, he would make him the best wig in London.

“Devil take me,” said the old gentleman, “if ever I allow you to take the measure of my head;—and I wish I had been at Jericho, before I allowed your baggage of a daughter to ~~take~~ the length of my foot. I a companion of a barber!” and he stamped while he spoke. “I wonder, you seum of the earth, how you presumed to sit down in my presence!”

The intimidated barber began to quake, and with great humility, tried to sooth his enraged son-in-law; but he might as well have attempted to still the winds:—the storm was raised, and

no earthly power, at least none that was likely to occur, could quell it. He was so perfect a madman, that his landlady came to enquire what was the matter ; and the barber took the opportunity her entrance gave him, of decamping with all the speed he could.

In answer to the questions of his landlady, Mr. Kinderton told her, a rascally beggar of a barber had had the audacity, not only to sit at his table, but to get drunk with him. The landlady said, she knew very well what he was, and what his daughter had been.

“ Had been ! What the devil do you mean ? ” said the bridegroom.

The lady did not wish to make a quarrel between a man and his wife ; but told him, if she had not known him as her lodger for years, in all which time he had behaved in the handsomest way in the world, she should have been doubtful of any one whom Mr. Fenning visited ; for though there certainly were

many very respectable men in that calling, he was not of the number.

Instead of taking any blame of his precipitate marriage to himself, Mr. Kinderton kindly bestowed it upon the Exeter ladies, who, he supposed, must have well known Miss Fenning's respectability before they took her into their house.

What was now to be done? She was his wife, — that was certain: he believed her abandoned, — but that was uncertain. He never was so cool when he had reason to be in a passion ~~as now~~; and we believe he would have knelt to the landlady, or any other lady, who would have eased him of his wife.

This object of his blessings just now came home, in high glee; and at the sight of her all his wrath kindled afresh, and he called her many more ungentle names than we care to sully our pages with.

The unfortunate Fair was in great

dismay ; but finding his fury increase, she thought it was best to brave it : and, abusive as he was, he now found, for the first time, his match, — and, in the end, his superior, for the lady had really the last word. — The disconcerted man revenged himself upon the brandy bottle ; and was taken to bed so drunk as to be quite senseless, about three o'clock in the morning.

Mrs. Kinderton wanted to make friends with the landlady ; but she fought shy, and she was left totally to her own wits ; — but these, though too busy to allow her to sleep, were unkind enough to fight shy also, and supplied no expedient for the furtherance of any views which would assist her. But she vented her wrath next morning upon her father, in no very gentle terms ; and the poor man was as much disappointed in his views as she was, — and was humility itself.

After breakfast, Mr. Kinderton ordered his carriage. He had not travelled

with his own horses, therefore he hired them, and a coachman and footman, for the short time he meant to stay in town. His wife, hearing the order, prepared herself to accompany him. He asked her where she was going? — she answered, “out in my carriage.” A long altercation ensued; but he might have saved himself his share of it, for the instant the vehicle came to the door, she ran down with more speed than he could overtake, and seated herself in it.

Be it remembered, that after a drunken bout, Mr. Kinderton was all but mad for the next day or two. His tender wife was surprised to see him now so placid. He got into the carriage, and it drove off. He was silent until just as they were at the bottom of Catharine-street; — he then pulled the check-string, and desired the man to draw up to the pavement. — “Now, madam,” said he, “I’ll trouble you to walk out.”

Mrs. Kinderton did not feel quite

assured ; and she said, " You are nearest, sir, I will follow you."

" Not for worlds, madam," said he : " I am, I hope, much too well bred for that. John can hand you out."

The lady thought it useless contending for a trifle, and was upon the step, when her husband, too much elated with the success of his manœuvre to be prudent, did not allow her to get fairly down before he said, " There, that will do : — now, madam, good day to you. Shut up, John." His wife, however, instantly turned, and had her foot upon the uppermost step ; but he held his arm across the entrance.

Two or three people who were passing, now stood to know what was going on ; and these gathered into a crowd as he spoke, " No, no, thank you, madam ; no ladies of your description in my carriage. Do you know, gentlemen," said he, addressing the crowd, " this infamous jade got into my carriage without my

leave, as it was standing at my door ; and she has the impudence to say she is my wife. The truth is, she is the daughter of Barber Fenning, of ——— street ; and I want to persuade her to go home.”

“ I know her,” says one : “ what, then, she aint married, after all ; — well, I thought as much.”

Mrs. Kinderton was as mad, with rage as ever her husband had been with drink. Forgetful of where she was, she vented her fury upon all : — swore she was his lawful wife ; and if she lived, she'd make him know it to his sorrow.” Meanwhile she was standing upon the step.

Mr. Kinderton preserved his coolness amazingly, while he prevented her getting in.—“ Gentlemen,” said he, “ she may just as well say she is an honest woman.”

“ And so I —” *am*, she was going to say ; but at that instant she saw her friend the serjeant, and the lie con-

scientifically stuck in her throat. Finding she gained nothing by opposing so cool an adversary, she at last got down : — the carriage was' shut up, and poor Mrs. Kinderton left on the muddy pavement.

In this trim, she forgot the serjeant, and hastened to her father's, and again vented her rage upon him for bringing her into this dilemma. Mr. Fenning, in his turn, just found out that there was a wide difference between the *rebuke* of his rich daughter, and the *insolence* of his ~~daughter~~ turned out of doors, and seeking shelter in his house. He therefore upbraided her for being above her family, and not telling her husband at first who she was, and who they were ; and after this altercation, he *ordered* her off to Norfolk-street, where she must make it up with her husband, and hide nothing from him in future. He told her, too, that he expected she would take one of her sisters, if not both, off his hands

for that he did not know *how* to provide for them.

This change in her hitherto obsequious papa, quite discomposed Mrs. Kinderton; and feeling herself in rather an awkward predicament, she found there was nothing for it but following his advice, and walking back to Norfolk-street. Great, however, was her mortification to be let in by the landlady, who would not espouse her cause; and who, judging by her own disposition, she concluded would rejoice at her humiliation, which she was sure to hear of from the servant. She therefore thought she had better be before-hand, and tell the story herself; and while she was about it, the carriage drove up. She hastened to her room, took off her hat and pelisse, and sat herself down unconcernedly to read.

When Mr. Kinderton saw her, he exclaimed, "What! the bad penny returned, is it? The barber won't have you, then, will he? I was afraid so at the

THE VETERAN ; OR,

time. — Wants to measure my head, indeed! I wish I had measured his back with my whip, — an old rascal!” The old gentleman had, however, gained his suit about the path-way, and was in high good-humour with every one but his wife and her family.

The next day she did not dare to offer accompanying him when he went out ; and she was surprised soon after to see a milliner’s deal-box sent home for him. Her curiosity was upon the stretch ; and she seldom chose to baulk it, when she could possibly indulge it. She therefore undid it, and saw a superb pelisse and a dress, which gave her great satisfaction ; for she thought he was sorry for what he had done, and was making her some amends : — for certainly he had not spent much of his money upon her dress. Indeed, it was with great difficulty she could get a supply of that valuable commodity. So she met him very smirkingly upon his return, and asked him what he had sent home in the

box? His answer was gracefully tender, "What is that to you? — I hope I am at liberty to send home what I please, ain't I?"

It is not the time, thought Mrs. Kinderton, I should have waited till he chose to present them. After dinner he rang for the man, desired him to nail down that box, and bring him a pen and ink; and great was her mortification, when she saw him put on his spectacles and write an address to his daughter at school, — which, when finished, he ordered to be taken to the mail-coach. —

She now thought to sue him for a separate maintenance; but what friend had she to support her? Her father, she knew, neither could or would, — so she proposed it to him herself. "Oh, by all manner of means," said the old gentleman, "I'll give you fifty pounds a year, but then I must be guaranteed against your debts."

"Fifty pounds a year!" exclaimed

THE VETERAN ; OR,

his indignant wife, “ *I live upon fifty pounds a year, that have been used to the elegancies of Sir George Freeman’s table, — impossible, sir. It won’t pay for my clothes.*”

“ Hark^{*}-ye,” said the old gentleman, eyeing her askance, “ What do you think of my having seen Sir George Freeman this morning. — I wonder how much your tag-rag and bob-tail was worth when first you saw them, eh ?”

No effrontery upon earth could parry this,^o and she must either submit to his indignities, and to be insulted before the servants, or condescend to accept fifty pounds a year. She decided upon the latter, as she thought she should be her own mistress, and it should go hard if she did not better it. So he had an agreement drawn up to allow her fifty pounds a year, provided she did not contract any debts ; — but if she did, they should be liquidated out of her next quarter’s income.

But knowing as the old gentleman was, he was sued for some debts of his wife's, amounting to nearly two hundred pounds, the first year:—he resisted, and was finally obliged to pay that sum, and the costs of a suit. He then ordered her down to the country, where he took ample revenge upon her. He got drunk most evenings; but drunk or sober, he took especial care that she should have no comfort;—and we fear we must set it down as his fault, and to his example, that she took to the same elegant propensity for the bottle.

The first time he perceived her inebriated, he swore it was the last time she should be so, for that nobody was ever allowed to get drunk in his house but himself:—however, she did contrive to get to the dear creature; and in a short time she rivalled her husband.

A more disgusting pair need never be seen; and therefore, with the permission of our readers, we will leave them for more interesting objects.

CHAP. V.

I had my trial, and, must needs say, a noble one.

Henry VIII.

A Visitor.

MR. TREVILLYAN had written from town to Miss Dennison at Birmingham that he had put all things *en train*, for that he feared the affair must come to a trial, as Mr. Melvington did not appear at all willing to accede to any private arbitration ; but that it could not commence until two months after the present time, when it was most likely both she and Mrs. Langton must appear in court : he would, however, be in town to give them the meeting.

During his absence, Mrs. Trevillyan had employed herself very industriously

in following out a little plan given her by Mrs. Fanshaw of a school for poor children. She had had the clothes made in readiness, and with the assistance of John Harding, it was all put in execution while his master was away.

A small house being vacant upon the estate, it was immediately appropriated; and with indefatigable attention she had furnished it in the neatest and most economical manner, so as to receive the scholars on the same principle, though on a much more limited scale than at Darlington.

She had been fortunate in finding a very *tidy* respectable couple, who knew enough to teach the children; and John Harding was constituted managing inspector of the whole. Not content with these exertions, she remembered the reproach she had met with at Darlington, and tried to recollect every thing which might please her husband on his return.

She had the best of her drawings put

THE VETERAN ; 'OR,

into neat but not expensive frames, and hung up in his dressing-room.

In these avocations, and attending to her sweet little girl, she lost the recollection of many discomforts ; her health improved ; and she met Mr. Trevillyan when he came back with a cheerful, if not a happy countenance. She had her child in her arms, who laughed at his approach, immediately knew him, and sprang to him, — and she had learnt to call him “ Papa.”

It was impossible to help being pleased, and for that evening he was the identical Mr. Trevillyan we knew two or three years ago.

The next morning she offered to walk out with him, and she took the road, as if accidentally, to the school. The children were all clean and neat, the boys either at their desks or lessons, and the girls in a separate room, all very industriously employed. Every thing appeared so nicely arranged, and in such

complete order, that Mrs. Trevillyan herself was surprised and delighted with the scene; and with confident expectation waited an exclamation of pleasure from her husband: but not hearing it so soon as she thought the circumstances deserved, she turned round to mark the satisfaction she was sure of observing in his countenance.

Alas! all was gloom there. Surprised and disappointed by the storm she saw gathering, she disregarded a question which the governess had just put to her, and hastened out of the house; he followed. "I think, madam," said he, "I might have had the compliment paid me of being consulted, before you took the liberty of changing the destinations of my houses, or have made yourself so busy with my tenantry. Had you brought me the estate, I should not have scrupled allowing you the right to do with it as you pleased, as far as these things go; but as you or your friends are

never, I fancy, likely to add one single acre to my property, I beg leave to say that I choose to be master of it myself, nor will I allow any one to seek popularity at my expense."

" Indeed, sir," answered Mrs. Trevillyan, with great gentleness, " it is my wish to conciliate your tenants, and attach them to yourself. My own individual interest in it can be very little, and possibly may be very short."

" Then, madam, why did you take all the credit of it upon yourself, by having it all done secretly, and in my absence. I suppose I shall have a fine furniture bill, such as I have just paid for you at Gil-
low's, for the fine things your lady mother chose to order without my leave; but I shall take the liberty for the future of hesitating to pay for what I have not bespoken. And now that we are upon the subject, madam, I must tell you how surprised I was to find my dressing-room all stuck round with trumpery frames,

such as would much better have suited your school-room, upon which you have been pleased to lay out so much money."

"Sir," said Mrs. Trevillyan, with calm dignity, under which she hid her anguish, though it was with great difficulty she did so, "there was a time when my drawings were said to be ornaments suitable to your saloon; and for the school, others can remember, as well as myself, the reproach I received for not having earlier thought of it."

"If you mean at Darlington, madam," returned her husband, "I dare say Mrs. Fanshaw never took the liberty of interfering in the management of her husband's property, without his sanction; indeed I remember she told you it was all his planning and his executing; but whether she interferes or not, they are to be no precedents for us; and while I possess the property, I *will* be master, sole master; and no Mrs. Fanshaw in the world shall dictate to me."

After a little pause, he added ; “ It is an even chance, if the estate remains in my family, thanks, madam, to your pretty romantic moonlight rambles.”

Mrs. Trevillyan was confounded,—she dared not trust herself to make any reply ; and not wishing to betray her emotion, she took a shorter path, reached the house, and hastened to the nursery : there her lovely baby welcomed her ; and in its infantine caresses she tried to forget the ill usage she had received. But she felt that her husband lost something every day in her estimation ; that it required all her forbearance to treat him as she ought ; and that far from hailing his presence as a blessing, she wished to avoid him as much as possible.

Sometimes the idea of a separation presented itself to her mind ; but she was now very near her confinement, and determined to wait the result of it. Her friends were all in the greatest anxiety about her ; for her letters, though they

made no complaints, yet they had lost all that vivacity of expression, which can result only from light-heartedness and contentment.

Our discerning friend John Harding appeared to redouble his attention to his mistress, in proportion as he saw his master's ill-humour increase ; and neither of them were sorry when Mr. Trevillyan again went to town, to meet Eliza upon her law-suit.

During his absence, John wrote to Mrs. Mordant, to say that his mistress's spirits were so dreadfully depressed, that although she tried to hide her feelings from her domestics, they were all alarmed for her ; that her health was very indifferent ; and in her present situation he thought she ought not to be left alone.

Young Mordant, who was strongly attached to his sister, immediately went down to Eldrington.

It had long been his wish to see her,

but Mrs. Mordant knew the temper of her son was too ardent, and too affectionate, to allow of his seeing his sister unkindly treated, without noticing it; and she dreaded a quarrel between the brothers-in-law.

Mr. Trevillyan had called two or three times in Sloane-street, and had once dined there, by invitation, to meet the Fanshaws; but then there was a party, and no family matters could be started; and far from giving any invitation to Eldrington, he did not choose to understand the hint, when Charles Mordant expressed a wish to see his sister; and he coldly said, that, "in her present situation, she was unable to travel."

Now, however, Charles took the opportunity of his absence; but his mother advised him by no means to take up his abode in the house, but to lodge at a small inn, a little way off.

When he arrived there, he sent a note

to John to prepare his mistress, who was extremely pleased with the intelligence. She had long wished his presence ; but after the harsh repulse she had met with when she proposed his attending the christening of the little Clara, she never again ventured to ask permission to invite him.

When she had sufficiently recovered from the surprise this pleasing news gave her, she took her child, and accompanied by John, walked towards the place Charles had written from ; but she soon found her wishes had out-run her strength, and she was obliged to get a seat to rest upon. Her brother, however, partook of her impatience, — she was soon in his arms, — and the meeting of these amiable relations was truly affecting.

Mrs. Trevillyan did not pretend to hide her unhappiness, — indeed it had made too great ravages, both on her face and form, to allow of deception.

She did not invite him to the house ;

but as the weather was very fine, they passed most of the three days he stayed in the grounds : — there, with his sister, and her beautiful child, he enjoyed the fine prospect, and there too it was that he informed her, that Henry Fortescue had long since returned to Malta, and was by this time married to Miss Henderson.

We cannot pretend to say that she received the intelligence with indifference, — a faint sickness seized her — but it was only momentary, — she soon mastered the emotion, and expressed her *happiness* — (reader, excuse a little deception ; women, though certainly the best of the creation, are none of them perfect,) — so she expressed her happiness that he had determined to marry, and hoped the lady was worthy of him.

Her brother proposed her separating from Mr. Trevillyan, and told her how happy her society would make them all in

town, where her children^s would be the pets of her mother and Mr. Fortescue, who was frequently talking of her; but that now the old gentleman was in high spirits, at the thought of again seeing his darling son returned in health and vigour to his native land.

This was certainly not an inducement for her to live in London; and therefore she begged him to say no more about it at present; and they parted with mutual sorrow and regret.

Meanwhile Mr. Trevillyan busied himself with more ardour in Miss Dennison's cause, than he had ever shown to any object besides himself.

She arrived in town, and Mr. Trevillyan requested Mrs. Barclay would favour him, by allowing her to stay at her house, which she readily conceded to the friend and sister-in-law of Colonel Desburgh.

The trial commenced under the happiest auspices. Her counsel, the eloquent Mr. P——, made out a most piti-

able tale ; descanted largely upon the wounded feelings of a young and beautiful girl — an orphan, too, of an officer who had, more than once, bled in the service of his country, and whose children were therefore peculiarly the objects of protection to every generous mind. Then he dwelt upon the uncontaminated innocence of the youthful heart, — of the ardency and confiding affection with which it yields itself to a first attachment ; and summed up the whole with an inflated and most pathetic tale, of the arts used to gain her affections, and her extreme wretchedness at his barbarous conduct, which had materially injured her health.

It was certainly very affecting, for all the female part of his numerous auditors were in tears. Mr. P—— well knew how to beguile their soft hearts of these pearly drops.

Indeed, when it was known that he was come over to open the prosecution,

the ladies cheerfully submitted to the inconvenience of braving a great crowd and heat, and each providently supplied herself with two or three cambric handkerchiefs, smelling-bottles, &c. ; for, gentle souls ! they were determined to weep. — Reader, pardon this, and a little farther digression, while we say that we have frequently been in company with those who are celebrated for their wit. — As soon as these gentlemen open their mouths, and before they have spoken three syllables, the smile begins, every ear is attentive ; and though his witticisms would be beneath a school-boy, yet, coming from him, they must be laughed at and applauded. And so it is through life ; once obtain notoriety, and all your follies, all your defects, are turned to virtues, provided you do not tax the public good-nature too often, for even that has its limits ; and so perhaps has the patience of our readers — therefore we hasten to tell them, that however

melting and affecting the ladies found Mr. P——'s statement of the cruel facts of this disastrous case, the perspicuity, and sterling good sense of the defendant's counsel, soon razed the tinsel fabric he had built ; — he brought forward so many corroborations of a conspiracy to entrap the unwary man, by this “ innocent guileless” young lady and her coadjutor, that although the damages were laid at eight thousand pounds, — and the jury were obliged to return a verdict for the plaintiff, the damages awarded — the recompence for all her sufferings, was — one shilling.

Mr. Trevillyan found himself exceedingly nettled ; he had no doubt from the opening of the business, and from Miss Dennison's assurances, of her getting heavy damages : but he found that he was deceived all the way through.

CHAP. VI.

To wilful men, the injuries which they themselves procure, must be their schoolmasters.

Lear.

Mischief.

MR. TREVILLYAN was soured by this disgrace, and he determined henceforth never to do any thing for any body.

While he thought Eliza was certain of coming off victorious, he had invited her to return with him to Eldrington ; and however provoked he was with her for hauling him into such a disgraceful trial, yet he could not do away the invitation — it would appear as if he deserted her in her misfortune : — he therefore prepared his wife, and hastened down to hide his chagrin, and vent his spleen at home.

Mrs. Trevillyan received them with a calmness which bordered more upon resignation than pleasure. He could not help observing how much better in health she always looked when he returned, than when he left home.

She had no opportunity of speaking of her brother's visit, and she felt perfectly indifferent whether he knew it or not.

Miss Dennison found she had lost ground with her host, for she was allowed to ramble out alone, and to seek her own amusement ; — and for want of other company, she frequently entered into conversation with the servants and cottagers.

It happened about this time, that some very young men, the sons of gentlemen in the neighbourhood, who were just come home from school, and who had much more spirits than wit, were disposed for a frolic ; and they could think of nothing so facetious as representing a ghost in the church-yard, which

happened to be a thorough-fare ; and so well did they perform it, that for a few nights they were the terror of the lower orders ; — nothing was thought of, nothing talked of by them, but this fearful apparition.'

We have before seen that our excellent John Harding was a faithful believer in supernatural agency ; — and one evening, when the servants were in high council expatiating upon the awful sight the church-yard afforded, he recalled to their memory the rencontre he had with the spectre the night that his mistress and he went to seek Felix. The company all drew closer together, and in great dismay listened with fearful attention, scarce daring to breathe, lest they should lose one word of a tale which they had often before heard, but never with so much interest as at present. They had each some question to ask, relative to his form, height, and figure, and whether his white garment floated in the wind,

like that of this ghost, or was close to the phantom.

John replied that he was very tall, and very slight, so much so that a gust of wind would have blown him away ; that no legs could go with the speed with which he vanished out of his sight ; but that instead of any loose white garment, it was dressed in a sailor's jacket, — he remembered it as well as if it was only last night that it had happened, — and that he was quite different from this ghost.

All his auditors with one voice declared that this was quite out of character and good taste, for that no ghost they had ever heard of, was bereft of the winding sheet ; and the housemaid, more bold than the rest, expressed her doubts if this was a ghost at all.

John became extremely angry that his decision should be doubted, and a little sparring ensued, which was interrupted

by Miss Dennison ringing for the housemaid, who always attended her to bed.

Martha was full of the subject; and being upon terms of more familiarity with Miss Dennison than she was with any other visitor, she told her the whole story, and begged her opinion of the reality of John's ghost.

Dullness of comprehension was never attributed to Eliza Dennison; it instantly occurred to her that this must have happened after Henry Fortescue came to England.

Well versed in intrigue herself, both by nature and by the example of Mrs. Langton, she had no sort of doubt but that this was an assignation between them, and that he and Mrs. Trevillyan had met frequently; she soon made herself mistress of as much as Martha could tell her, without letting her at all into her suspicions.

She laid her head that night upon her pillow with peculiar satisfaction. That

Mrs. Trevillyan, that cold and immaculate piece of ice, should be no better than her neighbours !—her prudery then and her starchness was all affectation !—The secret was delicious. — Mrs. Trevillyan had never liked her, and she had her now completely in her power, — she determined to sift the affair to the bottom.

With John Harding she dared not tamper, she knew he was too sterling ;—but she had made several acquaintances in her last visit with the neighbouring cottagers, and she renewed her calls the next morning, and soon learnt, that a fine handsome young gentleman had been at the inn, while Mr. Trevillyan was away last ;—that he passed all his time in the grounds, and was often seen seated there in close conversation with Mrs. Trevillyan.

This was better than she hoped ;—she knew nothing of Henry's return to Malta, and firmly believed this must be himself. She then, with great ap-

parent indifference, asked if they remembered a man in a sailor's dress, who was there in the summer some two years, or perhaps rather more, ago. The first two of whom she made these enquiries answered in the negative; but a third said, there was some such lodged at the cottage of a labourer some way off. Thither our indefatigable heroine tramped, but in vain, — there was no one at home, and the house was shut up; — but the failure of her first effort only lent spurs to her industry.

The next day it rained so incessantly, that her curiosity could not be satisfied; she watched every hour for a break in the clouds, but none appeared,—and her mischievous propensity had no play.— But the following morning, regardless of the mud, which often saluted her ankles, she waded to the cottage, and, happily for her, found the woman at home. The tenement was by the side of the road, and she begged to be allowed to

rest a little. The woman, who well knew who she was, very civilly offered her all the house afforded. She sat down, and soon drew from the talkative goody White, the extraordinary history of a gentleman who came there disguised in a sailor's habit — who was, for all the world, like one beside himself — looking so melancholy, and sitting still all day, and walking about all night,—it made her heart ache to see him ; then he had a fine heavy watch, and wrote so fine a hand !— “ My husband used to take letters to the Hall from him, and Mrs. Trevillyan gave him ten shillings for so doing. One day Mrs. Mordant shook hands with him, and they talked together for hours.”

Sack and sugar was never more to Falstaff's taste, than this tale was to the mind of our heroine.

Full fraught she returned home, and found Mr. Trevillyan very severely reprimanding his wife for using too much exercise. She bore his ill-tempered ex-

pressions for some time in silence ; but at last her patience was exhausted, and she answered him with some warmth. This led to a retort, and Mrs. Trevillyan quitted the room, in order to avoid farther altercation, particularly before Eliza.

It was the first time she had ever ventured to give him a rebuke ; perhaps, if she had acted with spirit from the first, he would have been more cautious of giving her opportunities. But now he felt himself exceedingly nettled and irritated, and his irritation throwing him off his guard, he had the imprudence to appeal to Miss Dennison, if his provocation was not beyond the patience of mortals, — quite unparalleled ?

What a fine opening for her ; she answered by a beautiful vindication of his wife. “ Yes ! but, my dear sir, you should really make some allowance for Mrs. Trevillyan, and forgive me if I speak plainly. Had you been the first object of her choice, one might suppose,

from the constancy and ardour of her attachment, these disagreements would not have happened : but she is peculiarly situated ; — think what must have been her sensations when first she met Mr. Fortescue, after having supposed him dead, and she married to another.”

“ Met Henry Fortescue !” exclaimed Mr. Trevillyan, in violent agitation ; “ met Henry Fortescue, did you say, — when ? where ? how ? ”

“ Why, dear Mr. Trevillyan,” said she, “ did you not hear of his recent visit while you were in town ? He lodged, to be sure, at the inn, but he passed all his —— ”

“ Death and fury,” eagerly interrupted Mr. Trevillyan ; “ met Fortescue ! — recent visit ! — my absence ! — but no, no, it is quite impossible. I enquired all about him, and I know he is abroad ; and I learnt too, for I spared nothing to ascertain the fact, that from the moment of his arrival in town to his em-

barkation at Plymouth, he never left his father but to go to Darlington."

"Indeed I cannot say who it was then," said the delectable young lady, "but I suppose you know that your wife had a visitor in your absence, and that she passed all her time with him."

"Miss Dennison," said Mr. Trevillyan, sternly, but with an emotion he vainly strove to hide, "beware of what you say, —my brain is already on fire, and if you trifle with me, you may make me mad altogether; answer me therefore, as truly as you would to your Maker, do you know that I am imposed upon by a fictitious tale of the man's going abroad, his marriage, and all that stuff? — Do you know that he was here, or what *do* you know?"

"Oh really nothing more than I have told you," answered Eliza; "and I dare say if you will ask others, you will find my information correct; but who the visitor was, I can't pretend to guess,

unless it was him. But indeed this is only my surmise, for I never heard that Miss Mordant had any *other* lover ; but I might have been mistaken in the object.”

The mischievous wretch knew she was adding fuel to the fire. Mr. Trevillyan rose up, and took hasty strides across the room ; after a pause, he stood right before her, — his passion increased as he spoke ; he began gravely, “ Miss Denison, I believe you think yourself under some obligations to me, — you certainly are so, — and if you would not have me think you the most ungrateful object under Heaven, I entreat, I implore, I *command* you to tell me all you know of the meeting between that hated Fortescue and my wife ; — for that they *have* met, I begin to think certain.”

“ Sir,” said Eliza, absolutely frightened at his austerity, “ when I began this conversa——”

“ Dam——n,” furiously exclaimed

Mr. Trevillyan, with his hands clenched, and a vehemence he could not suppress, "you are either the Devil, or ——; but," passion almost choaked his utterance, "tell me this instant, and without equivocation, tell me when did they meet, and where?" and he fixed his eyes on her with a look which tried to pierce her inmost thoughts.

"za trembled, and began to repent the 'hurricane she had raised. "They have met, sir, I believe, in your grounds at night, and while you were away; and now, sir," said she, rising, "you will please to remember, that you have torn this confession from me most unwillingly. I am the last person who would repay the obligations you remind me of, by the ingratitude of making you miserable, and I expect that you will not give me up as your author;—Heaven knows it was the first wish of my heart ——" But on looking round, she found she might keep her sentimentals to herself, he was quite

inattentive to them, and the next moment he darted past her and left the room, and she saw him walk quickly past the window to the village.

She retired to her own room, where not feeling all the satisfaction she had anticipated from what she had done, and fearing for what might be the consequence, she thought the sooner she moved her quarters the better for her.

CHAP. VII.

On my life, his malice 'gainst the lady will suddenly break forth.

As You Like it.

An Accusation.

THE innocent and unconscious cause of all these emotions was trying to lose her agitation in nursing her lovely little girl, who seeing her in tears, put her little arms round her neck, and began to cry too. This action greatly affected her mother, who freely indulged her emotion. The child, however, soon cried herself to sleep, and Mrs. Trevillyan exerted herself to get the better of her agitation; and when she had pretty well conquered it, she went down as calmly as she could to the sitting-room. This was about two o'clock. Soon after she saw

Mr. Trevillyan hastily passing the window and the next moment heard him in a voice of excessive irritation call for John Harding. John was not immediately forthcoming, and he burst into the sitting-room.

“ Mrs. Trevillyan,” said he, with assumed calmness, which, however, ill concealed the internal fermentation of his mind, “ I beg your attention to what may possibly be the last conversation we shall ever have together.” His voice rose as he proceeded with ironical severity,—
“ Pray, madam, by whose invitation was it that your lover, your favourite, your paramour Henry Fortescue came down to comfort you in my absence? It was a proper time, truly! a good opportunity to bewail your unhappiness together.”

“ Sir,” answered Mrs. Trevillyan, firmly, “ it was not Mr. Fortescue who was here, it was —”

“ Not Fortescue!” angrily interrupted Mr. Trevillyan; “ what! have you the

advantage of another comforter? you are well off, indeed, madam; but," with a malignant smile, "if I may take the liberty of asking after the visitors who honour me, by frequenting my poor house in my absence, pray who might this mysterious stranger be who came so very opportunely?"

"My brother, Charles Mordant, sir," answered his wife, with a mildness which might have disarmed a less irascible temper; but *his* only appeared more exasperated by her meekness.

"'Tis false, madam, false as hell, false as *you*," cried he, stamping his foot, and speaking through his shut teeth; "but I know all—all, all," and he laughed frightfully; "your brother was in town all the while I was there. But your nocturnal meetings—your letters—your fees—and all your duplicity, shall be laid before him, and before the world, I promise you."

While he was speaking, poor little

Felix lay trembling at his mistress's feet ; but as his violence increased, the frightened little animal leapt into her lap, and nestled to her for that protection, which, alas, she could not afford him ; for Mr. Trevillyan observing the affectionate creature, seized him with a frightful grasp, and held him up for an instant, while he said, " This confounded little cur, because he came from a Fortescue, is of more consequence in your estimation, than the man who has the misfortune to be your husband." So saying, he let fall the unoffending little animal, and gave it a violent kick, which sent him to the farther part of the room ; and uttering a piercing yell, he lay there without motion.

Mrs. Trevillyan gave a scream, and with difficulty reached the door ; there, however, he caught hold of her ; " Stay, stay, madam, you have not yet done ; answer me instantly, have you, or have you not seen Henry Fortescue."

“ I have, sir,” said she, and she grasped the door for support.

“ You have ! and you dare to tell me so ! to own it to my face !” exclaimed he, and his whole frame shook with rage. “ What, then the tale I heard of his leaving England and marrying at Malta was all a lie, a contrivance to hide your intrigues, was it ?”

Mrs. Trevillyan, roused by the horrible aspersion, acquired firmness to say with great dignity ; “ Mr. Trevillyan, I have long borne your ill-treatment, and without breathing a murmur against you to any human being, until I saw my brother,—no, not even to my mother ; but there are bounds to my forbearance. You have now insulted me with the grossest abuse : stay, sir,” observing him eager to interrupt her, “ hear my final decision ; for after this hour we meet no more. It will be my own fault if I again expose myself to your unmerited aspersions, and therefore your violence will not deter me from

doing what I conceive my duty to myself and my poor child,—God knows,” and her tearful eyes were meekly raised to Heaven, as if imploring a blessing upon it, “ what may become of the one yet unborn. Henry Fortescue I have seen once, but he gave me no time to speak ;” a look of incredulity from her husband gave her force to proceed. “ It is true he went to Malta, and there married ; but I am not about to enter into any vindication of my conduct as your wife, —I feel that it requires none ; and I go to friends who know better how to appreciate me. I leave you, sir, to those hours of repentance, which no doubt your cooler judgment will afford you. My mother will receive myself, and my child. Would to Heaven !” and it seemed a last effort, “ I had never left that dear mother, those kind friends, for the life of misery I have since known.”

Totally exhausted by the exertion she

had made, she sunk down upon the nearest chair, apparently lifeless.

John Marding had been an unobserved witness to the latter part of this conversation; he had heard that his master had enquired for him, and was just making his appearance as his mistress's scream alarmed him; he ran forward, and entered the room by another door; but, awed by her dignity of manner, he had not dared to interfere, and as she spoke, he became riveted to the spot.

Her animation gave a momentary flush to her cheek, and her commanding attitude, while her outraged feelings lent energy to her frame, gave her, to his fancy, something quite angelic. But her strength was short-lived; and when he saw her sinking upon the chair, he sprang to her, and, regardless of all distinction, exclaimed, "For shame, sir! will you be the murderer of your wife and child?"

He took the lifeless form of his mis-

tress in his arms, and carried her to her room; he summoned her attendants, and then went down to seek his master. He was not to be found; but poor little Felix lay moaning most piteously. He examined him, and found his leg was broken by the violence of the brutal kick he had received. He took him to the stable, and having committed him to the care of the coachman, he sent off the groom for immediate medical assistance; and an express to Mrs. Mordant, to whom he wrote two lines hardly legible. Again he went to seek his master, and found him at last seated in an unfrequented room.

“Leave me,” said Mr. Trevillyan, angrily, as soon as he saw him.

“No, sir,” said John, “I cannot leave you in this state of agitation, pray speak to me, and tell me what has happened, what has my dear mistress done to offend you?”

“Your dear mistress,” said Mr. Tre-

villyan, with returning passion, “is—is—what, had you done your duty, she would not have been,—but there is no fidelity in the world; and you, no doubt, were the abettor of her intrigues.”

John stood aghast,—he knew the innocence of his mistress; for excepting two days which he had asked leave to pass at Southampton during his master’s absence, he had never left her once since her marriage.

“If, sir,” returned he, firmly, “you accuse my mistress of infidelity, I will stake my life, my salvation, upon her innocence.”

“Who was it then that was here in my absence? and what man was it with whom she passed all her time while I was away?”

“Mr. Mordant, sir, her brother; and it was I who wrote to her mother to come herself, or send somebody down immediately, because her spirits sunk,—yes, sir, I speak it to yourself, sunk

under the ill treatment she received. Could my poor dear late master, sir, have seen you for the last twelve months, he never could have recollected you for his son."

Mr. Trevillyan absolutely gasped for breath ; he lost his anger to John for his presumption, in the turbulence of his own passions. It was then certainly her brother ; yet how was it possible he should come down by stealth ?

He forgot his own cavalier treatment and slights to him ; and being determined never to think himself wrong, he vented execrations upon him. Still, however, he was dissatisfied,—his wife had confessed to him that she had seen Henry Fortescue, and John positively denied that she could have done so.

Mr. Trevillyan cross-questioned John, who very simply answered, that his mistress had never gone out but one night, and that he had then accompanied

her ; that they met no man, and had seen nothing but a ghost, which, upon sight of them, vanished as fast, or faster than the eye could follow it. •The next morning a countryman brought back Felix, and Mrs. Mordant went out after him ; but that his mistress had never stirred out of the house after that night for some weeks, in consequence of her illness and miscarriage.

Mr. Trevillyan was beginning to waver in his opinion ; he knew that John was honesty itself, and believed him firmly attached to his interests ; but he had no doubt the ghost was Henry Fortescue ; yet the meeting might, on her part, have been purely accidental, and he immediately left the room, for the purpose of interrogating his wife.. But there awaited him a scene for which he was not prepared — Mrs. Trevillyan was in a state of perfect insensibility, and but that she breathed, she might have been supposed totally lifeless.

In this awful state she remained till the evening, when her medical attendants became exceedingly alarmed at the danger in which they considered her : — they used every means in their power, and were almost despairing of success, when they perceived faint symptoms of reanimation, and after some time she was collected enough to say, “ My mother, my poor mother, send, send — ” her voice failed, and she lay motionless during the night.

John Harding, who in every emergency was a host in himself, had tried to think of every thing for every body ; he told his master what was the wish of his mistress, and how he had anticipated that wish ; and besought him to prepare his mind to receive Mr. and Mrs. Mor-dant, as he had no doubt they would be there the following day. But Mr. Trevillyan appeared so absorbed as not to hear him, at least he certainly did not understand him, — he seemed lost in a kind

of torpor ; he neither retired to bed, or called for lights or refreshment during the night ; and but for John, he would have gone without. — However much that faithful domestic blamed his master's conduct, yet the habitual attention he had always shown him, and the respect he had imbibed in early life, “grew with his growth,” and made him ever alive to his wants.

But now his services were all performed in silence ; formerly, while waiting upon him alone, there was something to tell — a cottager ill, a marriage of some of the tenants, or the birth of a little stranger. It is true Mr. Trevillyan did not greatly interest himself in all these concerns ; nor did he, like his father, know all who rented under him, — he never entered into these concerns, and was indifferent to their wants or wishes ; but his servant was interested for the tenants, and hoped to interest his master.

At this moment, however, John felt

too much for his mistress, to condescend to any familiarity with him;—and certainly in point of internal satisfaction, he was much Mr. Trevillyan's superior.

The express reached Sloane-street soon after one o'clock at night, or rather morning; and it was not much past that hour the next day when Mrs. Mordant and her son arrived at the Hall. With breathless impatience did they examine the appearance of the servants, who having been upon the look-out for the carriage stood at the door ready to receive them. Alas! there was a mournful despair upon each countenance.

“Does she live?” exclaimed Charles, as he impatiently alighted.

“Yes, sir,” answered John, while the first tear which he yet had shed, slowly ran down his cheek, “she is now alive, but ———”

Mrs. Mordant ran with almost frantic eagerness to the stairs.

“Stay, my dear madam,” said John, “my poor mistress is now alive, but the

slightest surprise, the least noise even, may be fatal. There are some refreshments for you in the dining-room; while you take them, I will go and see if you may be admitted. But pray take something, for I fear," added he, as he sobbed aloud, "there will be much need of support — much to go through." My poor master! if you saw him at this moment you would almost forgive him."

"What, then," said Charles, "it is to his brutality we shall owe the death of that suffering angel, that martyr to our persuasions! Pray tell us how it happened?"

John found he had very unwittingly committed his master; but not willing to irritate them farther against him, he said another time he would do so; at present he would go to his mistress's door, and learn if Mrs. Mordant could be admitted.

Mr. Mordant led his distressed mother to the eating parlour, while John went

to Dr. Cleverton to request him to speak with them. Mrs. Trevillyan was then in strong convulsions, and quite insensible ; there was, therefore, no fear of recognition. Mrs. Mordant was prepared for the sad scene, and admitted to the sick room.

At six o'clock the sufferer became more composed, and some time afterwards she heard the voice of her mother, and her eyes were observed to look as if in search for her. When she saw her, she said, " thank God ! now I'm satisfied."

At seven she was seized with the pains of a premature confinement — and, to the astonishment of all around her, her child was alive, but very feeble. Her sufferings were dreadful ; but she had a son — the so much wished-for heir was brought into the world in the midst of misery, resentment, and repentance. He was indeed born in trouble.

The news spread instantly, and John in the happy event, which nobody dared

to hope for, allowed his transport to get the better of his^{re} displeasure ; he bolted into the room where his master was sitting, apparently stupid, and immediately communicated the happy intelligence.

Mr. Trevillyan started up, like one awakened from a dream, and seemed as if he thought he had not heard, or could not understand it :—the un hoped-for event was confirmed, and again repeated.

One might almost think, from his present incredulity, that he thought his wife had a patent for girls only.

An indescribable sensation shot through his mind — it was a combination of deep contrition for his misconduct toward his wife ; a doubt of her forgiveness, and a fear of the circumstance coming to the knowledge of her friends ; — and joy that he had a son who would inherit the estate, and prevent its belonging to a Fortescue.


His first impulse was to go to the room

and welcome the little stranger ; but John prevented him, and had courage enough to ask him if he *dared* to present himself to his wife without some peace-offering.

Mr. Trevillyan might now have been led by a child—his ideas seemed all chaos ; he never even asked a question after his wife's safety, but stupidly sat himself down again ; when John left him, in hopes that in solitude he would collect his scattered senses.

In time he became more composed ; —he was absolutely, then, the father of an heir to the Eldrington estate ; and he began again indulging bright visions of future greatness and splendour of the house of Trevillyan, such as he had before contemplated, when the birth of the little Clara proved the fallacy of his airy castles.

Now, however, there could be no disappointment — the boy was born, and nothing but a happy futurity awaited him.



In these visionary dreams did he pass his time, while his wife was at the extremity of danger.

Her two medical men stayed with her all the night, and had the satisfaction of pronouncing her better the next morning.

CHAP. VIII.

Let not my weaker spirit tempt me again to die before you please.

Lear.

A Catastrophe.

MEANWHILE Mr. Mordant carefully kept aloof from Mr. Trevillyan, who was equally averse from the meeting; but from the footman, who was not so discreet as John Harding, he gathered all he could of the cause of his sister's sudden indisposition; and his horror at her husband knew no bounds, nor would he have stayed a moment under his roof, but that Clara's danger overcame every other consideration.

Ten days passed, and the sufferer mended slowly. Poor little Felix, whose leg was getting strength, contrived to

escape the vigilance of John Harding, and to plant himself at the door of his mistress's room, and the supplicating whine he made there, attracted her attention. She shuddered at the recollection of the last time she had seen him, but begged he might be admitted: he attempted to leap upon her bed, but his leg failed him; Mrs. Mordant however compassionated him, and placed him there; and he took very good care to keep the situation afterwards.

To say truth, John was not sorry to get rid of him, for he howled so mournfully in his room, that to his superstitious fancy it appeared like a death warning.

Mr. Trevillyan had made many efforts to see his son, but he was always repulsed. The poor little infant, frightened into this world long before he was fit to encounter it, was so delicate as to require the utmost care and attention to keep him alive; the least noise start-

led and threw him into convulsions, when every gasp was feared as the last.

It would have been madness to have attempted taking him into another room ; and as Mr. Trevillyan was given to understand that he would not be a welcome visitor in the sick chamber, there was little chance of his speedily being gratified by the sight of this idol of his fondest ambition. But he consulted only his own inclinations ; the feelings of others were never considered by him if they militated against his wishes ; and he now felt strongly inclined to indulge himself in visiting his heir.

It is true he was informed that his wife had been very unwell for the last two days, but that might be told him merely to keep him away. She must see him some time, and it might be as well now as in future ; therefore, without sending any notice of his intention, which he knew would only subject him to a refusal, he slowly opened the door, and

entered the room. Felix instantly barked, but seeing him advance he growled, and then crept to his mistress, and lay cowering and trembling close to her.

Mrs. Trevillyan was lying with her face towards her mother, who was, in an under voice, reading the service of the day to her.—Alarmed at the bark, and the evident trepidation of the dog, she looked in Mrs. Mordant's face, to discover the cause of it; and observing a sudden agitation and emotion of anger in her countenance, she turned quickly round to satisfy herself, — and she saw — her husband. The effect of his appearance was instantaneous, — a cold shivering pervaded her whole form, which was immediately succeeded by a high fever and delirium. It was with great difficulty she was prevented from darting out of her bed, when she saw him approach the nurse, who was soothing the child to sleep upon her lap. She screamed aloud, as she said, “ Oh save him ! save

my child ! He'll murder, indeed, he will, he'll murder my poor boy. Take me, but spare, oh spare my innocent child !”

Despair lent her strength to resist those who held her. With frantic wildness she sprang from the bed, just as Mr. Trevillyan had caught the infant from the nurse's lap, in order to give it a hasty embrace before he quitted the room. The little creature had been so ill all the morning that Dr. Cleverton feared it would not survive the day ; and when it was quiet, the nurse frequently bent down her head to observe if it still breathed.

Awakened by the sudden noise, and startled by the rudeness of the hasty motion, — for he had hitherto been handled as a piece of alabaster, — he instantly became convulsed, and uttered a cry, — it was but a feeble one, indeed, but — it was his last ; — he lived for a minute, then his little head sunk, and he drew his last breath in the arms of his father.

When Mrs. Mordant went to take it

from him, she was inexpressibly shocked to find that life was extinct. "Wretch!" said she, "behold your work! begone, before you have added another victim, before you have sent your wife to your lost child."

"Lost child! lost child! lost child!" repeated Mrs. Trevillyan, with frightful rapidity, as if endeavouring, amidst the distraction of her disordered mind, to recollect to what these frightful words apply; — but the next moment she appeared to have lost the sound of them, and her mind seemed wandering upon other subjects, for she unconsciously loosened her hold of the child, which she had wildly caught from her mother; — and the nurse was glad to seize that moment to remove it before she was aware that it no longer breathed.

Mr. Trevillyan was horror-struck, — he stood the image of despair: but another look from Mrs. Mordant brought him to some degree of recollection, and

he rushed out of the room with the desperation of a madman ; — he had heard the voice of his child, — of his boy, — the object of his fondest anticipations, — and he had no doubt but that his imprudence had been the dreadful cause of its annihilation, and the failure of all his hopes ; — the thought was distraction. In this state he wildly darted into the apartment where Charles Mordant was sitting reading.

At sight of Mr. Trevillyan, whom he had not before encountered, he rose ; and without noticing him, excepting by a look of sovereign contempt, walked out of the room : — this was adding fuel to the flame.

Restless and agitated, — hating himself and all around him, — he hastened out of the parlour, for the purpose of hiding himself in the grounds. In his way he met servants running in every direction ; — they all avoided him, or if an eye met his, it was full of bitter reproach.

He turned away, and was directing his course to the library ; but here another mortification awaited him,—John Harding was relating to Mr. Mordant the sorrowful events of the last half hour. John's voice was greatly agitated ; but Mr. Trevillyan heard full well the sounds “ execrable wretch ! detestable villain ! ” from Charles Mordant, and this gave the finishing stroke to his phrenzy. As soon as they perceived him, Charles disappeared. He despised him before, — he abhorred him now.

Mr. Trevillyan ran into the library, stayed there a minute, and then took a circuitous path to the plantations. His guardian angel, John Harding, however, had observed the wretched and disordered state of his master, as he quickly passed one of the openings without his hat ; and hastened after him, in the hope of affording that consolation which the poor man wanted himself.

He could not at first find him, and it

was only by the sound of a pistol that he was directed to the spot where his master lay weltering in his blood. John allowed no time for the indulgence of his feelings, but ran back to the house, where he had left Dr. Cleverton, and the other medical gentleman, and procured their immediate attention. He then sent servants with a board to bring home their master, himself following with hartshorn and water, in case of need:

Mr. Trevillyan was not lifeless, but in a state of insensibility ; and in this way he was brought home.

Upon examination, Mr. Sandford, the surgeon, pronounced that the ball was so deeply fixed that its extraction was impossible ; and that although it was not a vital part, yet he was afraid that nothing could save him.

He lay in imminent danger, and excruciating pain, for five days. On the sixth he was somewhat easier, and was surprised at finding himself left quite alone.

Never having been used to neglect, he felt angry, and rang his bell violently; — there was a confusion upon the landing-place close to his door. A female servant opened it, he enquired what was passing. Careless of his feelings, as he had ever been of those of others, the woman burst into tears, “ Ah, sir,” said she, “ it is the funeral of your own dear, precious little baby. — It is a cruel, sorrowful sight,” added she, as she very deliberately left the door wide open, and seated herself where she could see distinctly all that was going forward, — and she wept bitterly as she indulged herself in contemplating the sad and distressing scene that was passing. Every now and then she broke into involuntary exclamations, as if quite forgetting that any one else was present. “ My poor dear mistress, — her sorrows in this life ——” Here her voice became inarticulate, sometimes it sank into a murmur, sometimes it was interrupted by her sobs as she proceeded, “ but

God will reward her ! His will be done ! — Meek as she is ——— Poor soul ! — and all for nothing too !”

Not the keenest reproaches, not the bitterest upbraidings, could have been so cutting to Mr. Trevillyan, as the simple effusions of this poor woman ; — every word and every action of her’s, together with the dreadful sight which he caught from the crevice of the door, found a ready way to his heart, — he sobbed aloud in agony. The servant, called to recollection by his sorrow, shut the door, and hastened to the bed-side, in hopes of giving him some consolation. “ O, sir !” said she, “ if you were to see my poor mistress, how she bears up against all this ; — but then, no doubt, she is supported from above. John was saying just now, that if ever woman went to heaven, it would be her, — and indeed I am sure she will.”

Softened to an emotion of tenderness he sent for John Harding, but he was attending the funeral. He was however in-

formed that Mr. and Mrs. Fanshaw were now in his house; and that the former had been prevented visiting him by Mr. Sandford, who insisted upon his being kept as quiet as possible.

He instantly sent for him, and felt greatly relieved by the comfort that excellent young man afforded him;—he sent him to supplicate his wife's forgiveness, and to beg that she herself would bestow it in person.

His friend told him she had gone through so much that morning, that he feared such a meeting would be too much for her; but that he would make his request known to her.

It was a trial every body wished to spare her; but when she heard it was his desire, she forgot her own sufferings in her anxiety to relieve his, which she knew must be acute. She sent him a very conciliatory message, but she was not permitted to leave her room that day; she promised, however, that she

would see him the next ; accordingly, as soon as Mrs. Mordant would allow, John Harding prepared him for her approach, and she was led into his room by her mother ; — they seemed mutually affected by the change they observed in each other's look.

Mr. Trevillyan was never handsome, and the ghastliness of his present appearance rendered him still less so.

She took his hand, and saluted him with kindness.

“ Clara,” said he, “ this is perhaps the last day of my existence, and I wish to say how deeply I grieve for the unhappiness I have occasioned you. — To my own misconduct I must attribute all that I now suffer, and the loss of our darling boy : — to me you owe three years of discomfort, when fate had every blessing in store for you, — and the future impossibility of ever being united to the man, whom, much as I have hated, I do confess seems worthy of you. Yet

sadly as I have blighted your fairest prospects, — greatly as I condemn and deplore my frequent unkindnesses during the few years we have passed together, I know so much of your goodness of heart and sweetness of disposition, that I ask your forgiveness with confidence as well as with humility. Having obtained this, I shall die more contented.”

“ My dear Trevillyan,” answered his amiable wife, “ my forgiveness I accord with all my heart. I too have not been without fault ; I ought to have run every risk, and told you all that had occurred ; there should be perfect confidence between married people. But we will not go into useless retrospections, — probably we are neither of us long for this world ; would it not then be more conducive to our present serenity, as well as for our future and eternal welfare, to supplicate forgiveness together, at that throne of mercy before which we may soon be called to appear.”

A look and faint smile of approbation encouraged her to proceed. She then in a low but clear voice began to read part of that fine service from our Book of Prayer—the Visitation of the Sick,—selecting those passages which were more immediately suited to the occasion;—and she was well able to select them, for there was no cottager ill who did not solicit her attention;—and having afforded them as much comfort as her purse would allow, she frequently read to them.

“ At her control
“ Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
“ Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
“ And his last faltering accents whisper’d praise.”

As she proceeded and became animated with the fervor of her devotion, her pure spirit rose with her prayer; her voice, always plaintive, was now most touchingly pathetic; and her pale countenance, rendered peculiarly interesting from recent suffering, gave her the ap-

pearance of a ministering angel, who with uplifted and tearful eyes was supplicating admission for an erring mortal to that mansion of peace, that blissful world, to which she herself seemed already to belong.

Mr. Trevillyan was exceedingly affected; and while he fixed his eyes upon his amiable wife, he absolutely looked upon her as something more than human. Mrs. Mordant, whose resentment of his conduct had hitherto overpowered every compassionate emotion of forgiveness, now drew near the bed, and with pious and reverential awe knelt down to add her orisons to those of her daughter; while *she*, with a delicacy inherent in some minds, identified herself with her husband in every supplication she made. — “Show thy mercy, Almighty God,” said she, “upon these thy servants, who most earnestly implore thy pardon and peace: we do truly repent of all our transgressions; we beseech thee to con-

sider our contrition, and to accept our tears ;” —and here they flowed so fast as to impede her utterance ; — but she had said enough. It is not by the length of the prayer, but by the purity of heart and fervour of spirit with which it is offered, that it becomes acceptable at the throne of grace.

The minds of all present, taking example from their angelic leader, were attuned to devotion ; and each, during the pause her excessive emotion occasioned, were mutually making their own peace with heaven.

For some minutes the silence was only broken by the sobs of John Harding, who had been in the room when she entered, and stood at a respectful distance ; but, affected by the solemnity of the scene, he dropped upon his knees before a chair, and with humble 'ardour joined in the prayer.

Mrs. Trevillyan was the first to rise ; and while a radiant smile of mental satis-

faction illumined her heavenly countenance, she gave the kiss of peace to her repentant husband, who returned it in great emotion.

John Harding left the room, and the next minute returned with their lovely child, who clapped her little hands, and laughed as she said, "Poor papa! Clara glad to see poor papa."

At that moment he felt all the pleasure and warmth of parental affection. He folded her as closely as his strength would allow to his bosom, while he solemnly prayed the Almighty to supply to her that protection which he found she would soon lose in him.

The unconscious baby smiled upon him, and returned his caresses; and, from the subsequent happiness and serenity of his mind, and the interval of ease he enjoyed from his acute sufferings, he dared to form a hope, or rather a wish, that he might be spared to the

happiness which he now knew how to appreciate.

Mrs. Mordant seeing her daughter look very faint, and fearing her exertions would be too much for her, hurried her back to her room :—there, however, her spirits gave way.

On the preceding morning she had seen her infant boy laid in his coffin ; and though she had commanded her feelings to meet the trying events we have recorded, yet she felt as a mother, and a fond one ; and now, in the privacy of her own apartment, she indulged her sorrow with all the softness—the weakness, perhaps—of a woman.

Mr. Trevillyan passed a better night, and in the morning sent to request his wife would visit him. He received the sacrament and made his will, and left her every thing he had the power of devising for her life, and, after her, to his child, amounting to about four hundred pounds

per annum, together with the plate. All this he did, with firmness and composure; — but when she entered, and he spoke to her of their approaching separation, then it was he felt too much agitation for his present exhausted state, — he could not bear to part with her for a moment; and whenever she left his bed-side to fetch him any thing, his eye followed her round the room, as if fearing to lose sight of her.

Her hand was clasped in his, and she frequently observed his lips move, as if calling down blessings upon her.

About four o'clock he grew worse, and she felt the hand convulsed which held her's.

She desired Dr. Cleverton to be instantly called up stairs, and when he arrived, he found that a change had taken place which he had before apprehended, and that a few hours would most likely close his eyes to this world for ever.

While feeling his pulse, which, contrary to his usual custom, he did this

time in silence, the patient, although suffering under extreme pain, was collected enough to say, " Dear Doctor, I fear you think my hopes quite vain ; but, I beseech you to tell me, is my case quite desperate ? must I part with this angel woman, at the very moment when I know how to appreciate her worth ? Oh ! I conjure you, save me even for a few years, that I may make up to her for the many hours of unhappiness I have caused her. Call in more assistance. I will patiently submit to any operation, if you will but afford me the slightest hopes of success. I am stronger, indeed I am much stronger than you think me."

During this speech, which was given with difficulty, and in broken sentences, which too evidently contradicted the assertion of his strength, he fixed his penetrating eyes anxiously upon the physician, as if life and death rested upon his fiat : but observing the emotion of his countenance, which was too powerful for him entirely to suppress, he added,

“ All is over, then, and I fall the miserable victim of my own misconduct ! my own crime ! of my own — hand. O God ! that thought is agony ! ” and he groaned as he said it.

Dr. Cleverton, who was a worthy and very good man, was exceedingly affected ; and Mrs. Trevillyan bathed the hand, which still held her's in a convulsive grasp, with her tears, which could no longer be controlled. The benevolent Physician, compassionating his mental, almost more than his bodily sufferings, said, in the soothing voice of comfort, so consolatory to a sick bed, “ The angel you have alluded to is a type of her heavenly Father, whose attribute is mercy, and, we are told, is never extreme to mark what is done amiss, or who could abide it ? No doubt her orisons will plead for your errors ; and if we are allowed, after death, to know what passes in this world, be it your happiness to observe the purity of conduct, and the

blessings which will no doubt attend your amiable wife and your innocent child.”

Mr. Trevillyan sobbed aloud ; — and then, as if his recollections were too painful, he hid his face in the clothes. He soon, however, recovered a little, and asked for his child. She was brought, and immediately blessed him with her cherub smile, and her infantine tokens of recognition. He half rose to kiss her in her mother’s arms — the effort was too much — his head sunk upon her shoulder, and there he breathed his last blessing, his last sigh, and closed his eyes for ever.

Mrs. Mordant, who had, with the rest, been prepared for the event, led her distressed daughter from the scene : — indeed the excessive agitation she had gone through, together with her illness and confinement during the last month, were alone sufficient to injure a stronger constitution than her’s ; but when to this

was added the death of her child, the cause of it, and the subsequent trials, no wonder that she was quite overcome.

Dr. Cleverton ordered her to bed immediately, and himself watched over her during the night; and he desired every thing might be kept as quiet as possible.

Mrs. Fanshaw had been her prop and support, and it was owing to the kindness of this excellent friend that she had resolution to go through her trials and distress.

Charles Mordant stayed until his sister was better, and then, being obliged to go to town, he wrote to Darlington, to tell them the events that had occurred; and, as he had heard of no contrition, he represented Mr. Trevillyan as a monster of turpitude and villainy.

The Fanshaws, dreading what must be the result of his rashness, hastened to Eldrington, and arrived there the very morning the infant was interred.

In the course of the week Mrs. Trewillyan was more composed—the funeral was conducted upon exactly the same plan as that of old Mr. Trevillyan, and Mr. Fanshaw attended.

John Harding was by far the sincerest mourner that followed it.

Old Mr. Fortescue wrote to his daughter Clara in the most affectionate terms, and in the handsomest manner consigned over the estate of Eldrington to her for *his* life ; and told her, whenever she was well enough to do the honours of it, he meant to pay her a visit ; but Mrs. Fanshaw, who had left part of her nursery at Darlington, was anxious to return thither, and determined to take her friend with her.

CHAP. IX.

Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd?

Hamlet.

An odd Choice of a Vehicle.

ELIZA DENNISON was appalled to think of the consequences of her mischievous conduct: — they were such as she certainly never contemplated.

John Harding, who never liked her from the first moment of their meeting at Southampton, strongly suspected that she must have had a hand in the foregoing scenes; and upon enquiry he found that she and his master had been talking loudly before; and that immediately after their conversation, he went out, and did not return till he called *him*.

In this interval, Mr. Trevillyan had

been questioning the cottagers, to whom he knew she frequently went ; and learnt the enquiries she had put to them, and the reference they had given her to the labourer, where the sailor lodged. He informed himself, too, of the gentleman who had been there during his absence ; and thoroughly convinced both of these visitors could be no other than his rival, he hastened home to tax his poor wife with crimes of which she never dreamt.

John's indignation against Eliza, when he made himself master of these circumstances, which was not till two days after his mistress's confinement, knew no bounds.

Lucky it was for her that she had walked to the inn where she had some time ago been put down by the coach, when coming the first time to Eldrington with the Colonel and Mrs. Desburgh. She there learnt the time the vehicle went by that inn, on its return to Gloucester ; and desired to have a place taken for

her, and that some one should fetch her trunk.

Accordingly, during the time when the house was all in confusion with Mrs. Trevillyan, and her husband was building his airy castles, she left Eldrington, too conscious to dare meeting his eye, and wishing to escape that of John Harding, with whom she knew she was no favourite.

She made Mrs. Trevillyan's indisposition an excuse for her sudden appearance to her sister, whom she found alone with her husband, the Colonel having gone to town in consequence of a letter he received from Woolwich, to say that one of his *protégés* had behaved so ill, that without his immediate aid he must be expelled.

The Colonel hesitated whether or not he should leave the culprit to his deserts; but his kind indulgence for youth determined him to the side of mercy; and having once made up his mind, he lost

no time, but set out by the mail-coach, and arrived just at the moment to save him. But he did not effect it without great interest and trouble ; and he took very good care that the stripling soldier should be very severely punished for his offence. This done, he called upon some old acquaintances, and particularly upon Mrs. Barclay, who gave him a strong invitation to her house, which was now all her own.

An uncle of her mother, a gentleman she had never before seen, and hardly indeed heard of, called upon her one day, and requested to know what was the name of her father ? She instantly answered, “ Robertson.”

“ Of what regiment ?”

“ The Guards.”

He then questioned her very minutely about her brother in India ; and listened with great interest to the history of her poor sister, and of Colonel Desburgh’s goodness. He took minutes of all that

she said, and then informed her that he was her great uncle, and that he had neither wife nor child; and that as all his nearer connections had turned out sad wild boys, he intended to make her and her brother his heirs.

He took his leave, and Mrs. Barclay heard nothing more of him for eight months; when she was informed that he was dead, and had left her ten thousand pounds, and her brother twice that sum. She had only been put in possession of it about a fortnight since; but she had given up letting any part of her house, and intended leaving it for a smaller one. She had written an account of these things to the Colonel, which was waiting him at the Rectory; and added, that now she was so rich, she begged to repay him the money she had drawn from his bankers some years ago.

The Colonel returned, that he kept no debtor and creditor books of this kind,—that all these accounts had been passed;

and as soon as that was the case, he never thought them worth troubling his memory about. But if she considered herself his debtor, "there were objects enough in London upon whom she might dispose of the money to advantage ; but he cautioned her against letting her feelings better her judgment, which, he said, was "generally the case with *good* women." He bade her beware of imposition, and investigate every tale before she parted with a sixpence. With these, and many other admonitions, he left her, and began to consider how he was to find his way down again.

Who would believe that this very man, who gave away hundreds with so much profusion, should resort to the most miserable expedients to avoid spending a useless shilling upon himself? He never thought of the expense of an inside place in the mail when he came up, — that was to serve another, and dispatch was necessary : now, however, his time was

his own, and he might take the journey as leisurely as he pleased.

It was really laughable to observe the means he took to save his money. Sometimes he was perched on the top of a coach, where his tall, thin, upright figure, surmounted by his great hat, gave the idea of a flag-staff; — sometimes in a return chaise: now in a taxed cart, — now on foot.

In one of these latter expeditions, and during the last stage from home, he was overtaken by a hearse, which was that evening merrily returning from a funeral. The driver hailed him, and asked if he would take a seat beside him. Preliminaries being settled, and the money paid, — for our veteran always made a previous bargain, — up he mounted.

Soon afterwards there came on a heavy shower of rain. The Colonel had no umbrella, and a great coat was a luxury he never indulged in. The driver stopped and opened the boot, from which he took

a cloke for himself; but, alas ! there was nothing for the Colonel, excepting some tattered remnants of black velvet, which, however, he contrived to fold round him. But the storm increased, and our old friend having had a slight warning of his age by some rheumatic pains, was not willing to get himself unnecessarily wet through, so he proposed to the man to allow him to get into the hearse. The fellow shuddered, — he had no objection to any sort of freedom on the outside, which his companions may choose to indulge in ; but for the interior, he considered that as sacred, a hallowed place for mortal remains;—and he would have as soon thought of getting into a coffin, grave and all, as into the hearse.

The veteran, however, had no qualms of that sort — his life and his heart were too pure to think of death with terror : besides, in his earlier years, he had been so familiar with the grim tyrant, who unsparingly mowed down his friends by his

side, that he never went into the field without having first settled his accounts with his Maker. He therefore persisted in his request; and the man answered, that if he could get in he might, but for himself he would have nothing to do with the sacrilège.

The old man alighted, opened the aperture, and dexterously contrived to slide himself in. He then fastened up the door, just leaving air enough to breathe; took off his hat, which he found somewhat inconvenient to the recumbent position he was obliged to adopt: and there he lay very snug, congratulating himself upon his own contrivance, and for the economy of his journey, wherein he calculated that he had saved one pound fourteen shillings and three-pence, having had neither coachman or guard to dun him.

Away they went, stopping every now and then to take up a passenger, until the machine was pretty well laden. The

rain had now ceased, and the setting sun, like any other well-bred gentleman, made a short visit of farewell before he went to enlighten other spheres.

The *perdu* veteran, finding himself somewhat cramped, and his bones not a little out of humour with the hard boards, upon which they got many a bump, began to think of resuming his seat by the driver, to which he was fully intitled by the original agreement. He looked out to see where about they were upon the road, and was exceedingly surprised to find, that instead of keeping the high way, they had turned off to a lane, and were now ascending a hill, right the wrong way to his place of destination. He therefore suddenly popped up his old and nearly bald head, and called out, "Halt! — Halt, I say! where the devil are you taking me to?"

The men, however, were sitting with their faces towards the horses, and being loud in conversation they heard

him not:—but there was on the causeway a man walking first, and his dame and child trudging at a respectful distance after him. Seeing this extraordinary object, which, aided by the dusk of the evening, and the old black velvet, which he had folded round him on the first coming on of the rain, was rather an awful spectacle, they set up a scream, which might have been heard at the next town if the wind sat that way, and which made all our company turn suddenly round to learn the cause: but no sooner was their curiosity gratified than their imaginations began to give them sad annoyance: no sooner did they perceive the veteran's white head, in strong contrast to the black drapery with which he had adorned himself, than they all, with one accord, took him for the devil, or an apparition, — the twilight and their fears prevented their exactly ascertaining which;—but they thought it might be quite as prudent to keep to the

windward of both, and as they were going slowly up a hill, they threw themselves off the carriage, and took to their heels with so much assiduity, that they were out of the reach of the driver's voice, before he himself had time to recover his astonishment; for even his senses had been somewhat scared by the odd figure he saw, although aware that he had a stranger in the hearse. But his loss and his provocation were great.

The truth is, that one of his companions had given such an inviting account of the excellence of the ale at a certain public-house a little way off the road, that he inflamed all his hearers with a violent thirst for tasting it, and the driver was nothing loath to indulge them,—there too he was to receive the different sums for his outside luggage.

His interest then soon brought back his scattered senses—here was a certain loss of three good shillings. However, he had the Colonel safe, so he would make

him pay for the loss he had occasioned him.

He began swearing, therefore, that he would keep him in the hearse, without he consented to satisfy his demands : but the next moment forgetting this threat, he called out, “ Why don’t you speak, you old rascal ! — Come, come, crawl out of your hole ! I’ll have no more devils, or apparitions either, in my hearse.”

After this, and many more gentle expostulations of the same nature to no effect, he alighted, to give them more force ; when upon examining the inside, — it was void, — neither man, devil, or apparition was there.

His dismay was great ; he began to think it surely must have been one of the latter objects that he had taken up, and he cursed himself for a fool, for supposing that any mortal man would have dared to shut himself up in so awful and

sacred a place. His teeth and his hair began to give sensible signs of fear, and the cold dew in which he found himself bathed, reminded him of the comforts which abounded at the aforesaid public-house ; thither, therefore, he determined to go, so he again mounted, whistled very loud, whipped his horses, and soon reached the wished-for mansion.

Meanwhile our veteran, who well knew the country, for he was within two miles of the Rectory, was tramping very contentedly home, not a little amused with the fright he had afforded the passengers.

When he found the driver was going the opposite road to his inclinations, and heard something about making him pay for the rest, he thought as he had paid his own share, he may just as well not lose time in the altercation, so he let himself gently down, after having taken off the velvet, which he very ho-

MATRIMONIAL FELICITIES.

norably left in the hearse, and took the well-known path home; but he long heard the whistle of the affrighted driver.

The moon, which, in all works of this kind, shines so conveniently either for the purpose of sentiment, intrigue, elopement, or description, now condescended to cast one of her brightest beams across the path of a good old man, who was quietly returning from a journey of benevolence, and going home to his child and his friends at a peaceful parsonage house:—very un-sublime, we grant, but that is the moon's fault, not ours,—if ladies will bestow their favours so indiscriminately, there is no harm in our recording it.

When he reached the Rectory, he was received by Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds with great and sincere affection; the latter busied herself in procuring him all the comforts he would allow; but he was so simple in his diet, and his wants were so few, that he was very easily satisfied.

His boy was gone to bed, and much as he wished to see him, he repressed his inclinations, rather than disturb him. He was much surprised to see Eliza there, and extremely sorry to learn the indisposition of Mrs. Trevillyan, yet he well knew the joy there would be at the birth of an heir. There were then several letters put into his hands, which had arrived during his absence ; amongst them one from Eldrington ; “ Aye,” said he, while he put it down till he had finished the egg he was eating, “ this is the official announcement of the heir ; they might have sent it by you, and saved postage ; but it is the writing of Mr. Fanshaw, how comes that, I wonder ?”

Eliza had been startled with the same circumstance, she had given many a wistful look at the letter, for her apprehensions whispered the possibility of a duel between young Mordant, who with his mother had arrived the day before she left the hall, and Mr. Trevillyan.

The Colonel broke the seal, and became greatly agitated as he read the accounts of the different scenes we are already acquainted with ; but when he learnt the sad end, the dreadful catastrophe, the paper fell from his hands, and he could read no more. Eliza flew to him, and picked up the letter ; and her curiosity getting the better of her deference, she read it while every limb trembled.

After recapitulating the extreme sufferings of his friend, his repentance and his confusion ; Mr. Fanshaw added, “ yet much as he went through, and greatly as I deprecate the horrors and the guilt of suicide, I would rather be my poor friend, with his crimes upon my head, than the wretch who first awakened suspicions of that purity which none but a vicious mind could doubt.”

Eliza was exceedingly distressed,—she certainly never contemplated the consequences of her conduct ; and she felt all

that Mr. Fanshaw intended she should, and much more than he believed she could feel.

The Colonel, who was as unsuspicious as a child of those about him, never dreamt that Eliza could be the wretch alluded to ; but he very undesignedly assisted his correspondent in punishing her, by bespeaking a warm place in the next world, for one who had been so cold-hearted and diabolical in this.

Eliza rose in agony and left the parlour, and the two gentlemen supposed her feelings were excited by the horror of the event.

Mrs. Reynolds, however, more alive to the misconduct of her sisters, strongly suspected the truth ; and upon again looking over the letter, she found the kindest regards were sent to her husband and herself from all the party ; but that Eliza's name was not even mentioned. Inexpressibly shocked at so strong a confirmation of her suspicions, she hastened

after her sister, determined to ascertain the terrible fact, but she had retired to her room and locked the door; and no persuasions could induce her to open it.

The next morning she came down to breakfast pale, and with her eyes inflamed so much with recent weeping, that Mrs. Reynolds forbore to interrogate her. She found too, that she had not been in bed the whole night, for it was untouched; and as her contrition appeared very sincere, Mrs. Reynolds was too kind-hearted to tax her with the weight and enormity of her crime.

Our veteran, who felt for all, did not recover the shock for a length of time: he wrote to Mrs. Trevillyan, and he did it in so kind and consolatory a manner, that every one felt themselves included in his sympathy.

Mrs. Trevillyan was exceedingly gratified by his affectionate interest, and she was thankful also for the respect with which he spoke of her husband, for she

was very tenacious that his memory should be honoured ; and she omitted no token of regard to it. Before her, nobody ever reverted to his unkindness, or to his failings ; for, with the genuine indulgent benevolence of a female heart, she forgot, or at least forgave, and lost sight of his errors in his affectionate repentance and contrition.

As she could not be persuaded to leave Eldrington for a time, her Darlington friends left her, tolerably recovered, under the care of her excellent mother, and to the frequent visits of her brother.

CHAP. X.

After he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn.

Much Ado about Nothing.

Hide and Seek. — High Life.

It is now proper to tell our readers, that in due time, and according to the prognostications of her aunt to Mr. Fanshaw, Lady Neerdowel presented her father with a young baronet elect; and we believe that the old man, plain and unassuming as he thought himself, was nevertheless pleased with the idea of his descendant being a baronet, cheap and common as they are.

As for his wife and Mrs. Samuel Barlow, they never attempted to disguise the self-consequence they assumed upon the happy occasion.

This affair over, and his daughter reco-

vered, the old gentleman thought it high time to investigate the real state of Sir John's affairs, and ascertain what might be the probable patrimony of his grandson. Accordingly he consulted his friend Mr. Fanshaw, who entered warmly into the business, and by the assistance of a very worthy barrister he learnt, that although Sir John Neerdowel could not command a shilling, and was now entertaining his creditors with the amusing game of hide and seek, though he had sold all interest in the fee-simple of his inheritance, yet that upon his death there were two estates which must devolve to the male heir, the produce of which might net about nine hundred pounds a year. He learnt also that Sir John, and two or three more of his intimates, who were in the same hopeful predicament, had agreed to assist each other in eluding the vigilance of those officious gentlemen, who had the vulgar propensity

of feeling what sort of cloth the coats of young men were made of.

It was very entertaining to observe the stratagems used by both parties; and however childish some of our readers may think the above-mentioned game of hide and seek, we contend in defence of it, that whatever sharpens the wit, and exercises the intellects of our modern young gentlemen, must be a very desirable improvement of the time now thrown away in making themselves as ridiculous as if they were equipped for burlesque.

Sir John had a fac simile, according to Barberossa, of his head in the shape of a wig, which, placed upon a block, was put into his room, so as just to be seen from the street, whenever he wanted to fix the attention of his officious friends to a particular spot, while he went elsewhere. The gentlemen wore each other's dresses, sometimes were seen with huge mustachios, now a light wig, now a black, and sometimes a red one.

It was observed, too, that they had all of a sudden shown a great liking to churches on a week day, though they seldom troubled them on Sundays.

When besieged in these holy resting-places, and obliged to turn out, sometimes they escaped their pursuers in the costume of the clerk, and not unfrequently in that of a pious old woman. In short, Mathews himself is not a more skilful Proteus, than were our heroes, nor could he change his attire more dexterously or expeditiously. But with all their ingenuity, the odds were desperately against them; and one of the luckless wights was taken.

He was a young man of great talent and drollery, whose greatest fault was his love of conviviality, frolic and expense. It happened very unfortunately, that he was engaged out to dinner with a very gay party, where he promised himself much pleasure:—his treacherous servant gave notice of this to the vigilant of-

ficers. Finding there was no help for it, the gentleman begged so earnestly to be allowed to fulfil his engagement, that upon his promise of honourably surrendering himself the next morning, and being well known, he was permitted to depart.

He went, and was the life and soul of the company; slept at his lodgings that night, and the next morning voluntarily offered himself for imprisonment.

Sir John took a hint from the credulity of the bailiff, and being soon after taken he requested the indulgence of dining with his friend. The man hesitated, but assured by Sir John's plausibility, he at last acceded:—thus all watching, all suspicion was done away for the day. He went to the harbour much muffled up, jumped on board a vessel, and long before the time he promised to attend the bailiff next morning, he was in sight of Holyhead.

In London he hid himself for some

months, but at last was detected, and safely lodged in the King's Bench ; and here it was that he was informed by a letter from Mr. Barlow of the birth of his son and heir, which he only cared for, so far as it prevented his brother's family from inheriting the title and property.

This Mr. Neerdowel had many times paid debts for his ungrateful spendthrift brother : indeed so fond was his family of him in times past, that they made many sacrifices to save him from difficulties. An aunt, whose pet he was, denied herself those comforts she had ever been used to, to supply his extravagance, but nothing could reclaim him.

When he was low in cash, and much in need, he was so contrite, so amiable, it was impossible to help believing him sincere ; but the instant his debts were paid, and a little money put into his pocket, he was off again, and his relations were never troubled with him, until all was spent : — this tired them.

Mr. Neerdowel then proposed taking the estates into his own hands, allowing Sir John three hundred a year, and dividing the annual surplus amongst his creditors. To this all parties agreed : but his wants again becoming imperative, he sold his life-interest, cheated his creditors of what he could, and then found Mr. Barlow a delightful gull, to supply him the means of dissipation ; and the twenty thousand pounds he received with his wife enabled him to go to Ireland, where he made a small dividend to each of them, and squandered the rest at the gaming-table.

Mr. Barlow was quite satisfied at finding Sir John had for once told truth in regard to the intailment of his property, and in high good-humour consented to the marriage of his second daughter ; to which Mr. and Mrs. Fanshaw were invited. They were passing the winter in town, and happy in any opportunity of giving pleasure to others, they cheer-

fully joined the gay party, who received them with grateful affection. "

The Oxonian and all the family attended; and Mr. Fanshaw was surprised to observe the improvement a few months, at a finishing school near Berkeley Square, had wrought upon Miss Suky.

This was the first introduction of Mrs. Fanshaw to Mrs. Samuel Barlow; and that lady took care to show her the utmost deference and attention. — It had been concerted between her and her husband, that he was to draw her out, and to remind her of a tale she promised to tell him. He took an opportunity of doing so, — but she told him *that* was an old story; but a few evenings ago she met with an incident which had caused her much diversion, for she could not help remarking how envious her neighbours were of her, and the good she had in the world: "For, sir," said she, "we made so good a hit

last year with our oil, that if we are as fortunate again, we shall do as well as my brother John; who, to be sure, advised us in all we did; and he says we shall be richer than he is; and who knows what my daughter Suky may do? We are going to leave the city entirely, sir, for her sake; but we are not to spend what we get, — brother John takes care of that; so we've taken a small house, and are to live very quiet till we are rich; and then we'll do as brother John does. — So, sir, this is my last city story.

You have heard me speak, Mr. Fanshaw, of Mr. and Mrs. Tret, the grocer, — the same as was so happy to find out the hoax that was played us by that fine marquis. — Well, sir, they were Roman Catholics. At their chapel they used to meet one Lady Teenham, to whom she paid great suit and service; and at last offered to visit her. — Lady Teenham consented, and the next Sunday

Mr. and Mrs. Tret they went to make their call in Finsbury Square ; and they were very much disappointed that she was not at home. Mrs. Tret sat in her best bib and tucker, waiting the return of the visit, which at length was made. And now all her ambition was to show her neighbours and acquaintance that she could sport a ladyship as well as me ; never recollecting that her's was a knight's widow, while mine was a full and real baronet's wife, — and the mother too of a future baronet.

“ Well, the very week after this, she sends a card of invitation to tea and cards for a day a fortnight distant, and very anxious she was till the answer came, when she had the pleasure of finding her ladyship would come. So then she sends to all those she wanted to show off this ladyship to — and me amongst others — to meet her. We were all surprised at the length of the invitation, as we used to think three days’

notice was quite ceremony enough ; so we were all curious to know what was in the wind now ! Well, Mr. Fanshaw, we watched neighbour Tret very busy bustling in and out for two days before. — The evening came, and we all went full paff ; there was Mr. and Mrs. Cramp, the shoe-maker, in Bond-street, whom Mrs. Mary Ann Clark as you know of, called the Emperor of Morocco, and the three Miss Cramps. Then there was Mr. and Mrs. Fallal, the milliner, from Albemarle-street, and Mad. Trepollie, her mother, and young Master Fallal, dressed in the very pink of fashion. Both these parties came in their own carriages, and a great many more whose names I don't know ; but it was a finer party than ever was in that house before, — and the very cream of neighbour Tret's acquaintance. — Well, we waited and waited, but no ladyship came, and Mrs. Tret looked very disturbed : at last the

stair-clock struck eight, and she ordered tea. — Now I must tell you, that she had hired a waiter, but he was not enough, so the shopman he was dressed out in his Sunday's clothes, 'and he was handing about the tea and coffee, and 'tother was with the sugar and cream, cakes, and so on.

“ Well, Mr. Fanshaw, we were all so engaged, that we never heard the coach stop ; and instead of going to the private door, and knocking as he should do, the footman went into the shop, and seeing a servant girl, who was put there to mind it, he said, ‘ announce Lady Teenham.’ The girl, without giving any answer, ran up stairs to her mistress, and whispered loud enough for me to hear,

Here's one as wants an ounce of tea, ma'am *, may Ben come down and serve it ?’ — ‘ No no,’ says the discom-

* This fact happened at a county town, where it will long be remembered.

posed lady, ‘say we have none, or tell ’em to call again, or ——.’ But Sally did not stay to hear more.

“ Neighbour Tret, however, always was one who looked to the main chance, so she did not like to lose a customer, and called to Sally, who was running very quick down stairs, ‘Stop, Sally, stop,’ said she, ‘I’ll come down and serve them myself.’

“ Sally’s head was turned back to look at her mistress, and as she went down the narrow stairs very fast, she comes bounce against my Lady Teenham, who was finding her own way to the drawing-room. — Sally’s candle went out by the *contract* of the satin sleeve of her ladyship; and as the light from above was only a poor candle, instead of an oil-lamp, as it should have been, they were all left nearly in the dark. The great lady screamed, and I, that wanted to know what the bustle I heard was about, snatched up a candle, and ran to the

landing-place, where I saw Lady Teenham groping her way back to the shop, and Madame Tret after her, calling Sally a fool, and making a thousand apologies to her ladyship ; but she did not seem to accept them, for she said she was so frightened she must go home, and went to look for her carriage, which, unfortunately for Madame Tret, had not gone away, for the coachman was gossiping with an acquaintance ; so no persuasions of our neighbour could induce her to make her appearance in the drawing-room, — away she would go, and she did go : and I shall never forget the mortification of Madame Tret. I could not say, Mr. Fanshaw, as I was very sorry for it, 'cause you remember how she served me when she found out about the Marquis, — why, do you know, sir, she has not done telling me about it even to this day ; — but I think I'm even with her now. However, the next morning Mrs. Tret she sent to her ladyship, and hoped

to make it all up ; but the lady fought shy, and would not be at home. How they have managed it since, I don't know, but I rather think she won't get her ladyship there again in a hurry."

Mr. Barlow entertained his guests with a very hospitable dinner, and the happy pair went to pass their honeymoon in the country.

The Oxonian, however, began to think his father was rather too lavish of his money, and looked with an eye of jealousy upon young Master Neerdowel : he took the liberty of reminding the old gentleman that Lady Neerdowel had already had her portion, and he was terribly shocked and surprised to be answered in somewhat more severe a tone than usual.

" Young man, I made my own money, and after giving you an equal provision with my other children, I shall give the residue to whom I please."

In sulky disappointment he determined

to leave home, and to trouble it very little for the future.

The nephew Ned, although nothing could make him a gentleman, was so much altered in his manner, that one could hardly find fault with him. In fact, Lady Neerdowel seemed to have made a great change in the manners of the whole group; and as she had a great deal of good sense and good temper, every one looked up to her manners, and her opinion, as the acmé of correctness and gentility. By her direction, Suky was sent to school; by her persuasions, Ned had left off betting: in short, she was the origin of all the splendour and respectability they now enjoy in the county they embellish.

CHAP. XI.

He hearkens after prophecies and dreams.

Richard III.

Give me your hand and let me see,
Your future fate, and Heaven's decree.

The Fortune-Teller.

Two or three months after Mr. and Mrs. Lacket's marriage, she found herself

“As ladies wish to be who love their lords;”

and this occasioning her some indisposition, she was frequently obliged to retire to her room very soon after dinner.

Finding himself idle one evening, Mr. Lacket went alone to Covent Garden Theatre. The play was the Stranger, — he became exceedingly interested at Miss O'Neil's representation of Mrs. Haller,

and at the very moment when this inimitable actress was upon her knees, affectingly soliciting forgiveness of her indulgent husband, — when all, the audience, himself included, were in tears, his attention was unpleasantly interrupted by a female, who used all sorts of blandishments to attract his observation. At first he would not notice them, when she, finding her arts ineffectual, pronounced his name. He instantly looked round, and saw a lady in a thick veil, who, though she took great care to expose a very fine person, was equally tenacious of keeping her face concealed.

As he was much more inclined to attend to, and compassionate the faulty Mrs. Haller, than the frail fair one who now addressed him, he again rivetted his eyes on the stage, and soon forgot the interruption in the interesting play. But he was not long suffered to enjoy the painful pleasure of weeping over imaginary distress, — the same lady* again

pronounced his name, and invited him to supper.

Mr. Lacket, quite out of patience at being so annoyed, rose hastily, and without noticing her quitted the box, and entered one at some distance, where he contrived to seat himself so that there was no possibility of a similar attack.

The play ended, and his attention being now disengaged, he looked round for the object who had so provokingly driven him away. She was sitting apparently looking towards him ; but her veil was still down. It struck him that she reminded him of some one he had seen before, and being a nervous man, he felt that he might have been just as well at home.

Two or three times in the course of the after-piece, while Liston was drawing down thunders of applause, and the audience was convulsed with laughter at the farce of Tom Thumb, he turned his enquiring looks to the other side of the

house, and there always saw his fair friend observing him. He rose and hastily left the theatre.

As he walked somewhat quickly home, however, he was startled to see the same lady, veil and all, on the other side of the street, evidently following him ; she soon crossed and overtook him. She repeated her invitation to him to go home and sup with her, which being rejected in rather a tremulous voice, she was encouraged to beg, very importunately, for money.

She kept close to him, and told him a very long, and in some respects a very true story of her distress. She said that she had always been used to luxury, and had been brought up with the utmost care and tenderness ; that she had married, but that her husband ran away for debt, and left her in a distant country, without the means of subsistence, — indeed absolutely penniless ; that she had found the means of coming to Lon-

don by selling her clothes and other valuables ; but that at present she was really destitute, and was obliged this evening, for the first time, to present herself at the theatre.

He did not stay to consider whether he believed the story or not, his only thought was how to get rid of her. He was just now at his own door, — what was to be done ? She was so importunate, so presuming, that if he stopped at it she might either take the liberty of going in also, or of making some disturbance, which might awake his wife. He had no change in his pocket ; but at length seeing the woman determined to persevere, and that he had no alternative, he gave her a one-pound note ; and then turned down another street, in order to avoid letting the fair one know where he lived.

He found his wife asleep, and thought it needless to disturb her in order to inform her of the incident. And the next

morning at breakfast, though he remembered every thing of the play, and mentioned the parts most affecting, he forgot the lady and the note, although of more recent occurrence.

It is astonishing how inconsistent the memory is! retaining some things, and forgetting others equally important, which happened at the same time. Yet when his wife was not present, Mr. Lacket did sometimes think of the lady; and as he had always been of the most frugal habits, he thought too of his one-pound note.

Two days afterwards, as he was passing through the Park, from his house in Great George-street, to Spring Gardens, he was accosted by a gypsy, who begged leave to tell his fortune. He would not notice her, but passed on; still the woman plagued him; — he threw her a few halfpence, and proceeded on his route.

“ Sir,” said the woman, “ stay, listen to your fortune.”

“ My good woman,” said Mr. Lacket,

“ don’t plague me ; I know my fortune long ago, and there is little you can tell me.”

“ Try^o me, sir,” said the gypsey, pleased at having forced him to speak to her, “ do but try me, I can tell you of plots raised against you, — of your being superseded in the office, — friends turning to enemies, — and enemies becoming more inveterate.”

Now it happened at this very time that Mr. Lacket, who was nervous and fanciful, had taken it into his wise head, that his superior in the office, Lord —, had been cool to him of late, and shown more attention to a junior than to himself. He had given him things to do, which usually fell to the task of Mr. Lacket ; and though all this was done to spare the latter, it was to him a subject of mortification. The present address, therefore, was extremely apposite, for he doubted not there was a scheme laid to oust *him* for the other. He ob-

served, too, that this was no common object, her language was quite sufficient to assure him of that, — so he turned to her with great surprise, and said, “ in the name of Heaven who are you ? ”

“ One who could warn Mr. Lacket of the evils to come,” replied she, with confidence, “ one who came here for that purpose, — and one who can save him, if he will have confidence in her.”

Miss Fenning glanced across his mind; but Miss Fenning was not so tall. Who could this be, then? He stopped, almost unconsciously, and cast a scrutinizing eye on her face: it was blacked, and her hair was much about it. The features, however, were not new to him; and the firmness and determination of her countenance somewhat intimidated him, which she soon perceiving, immediately took advantage of it; and with art followed up her plan so well, that she excited his curiosity to the highest pitch by the most ambiguous language,

which none but so sick a fancy as his could have applied.

To him, however, every thing came home; and had she chosen to persuade him, that she was an angel descended from heaven on purpose to tell him of these things, or the Devil come to plague him, he would no doubt have believed her.

When this lady found the temper of the animal she had to lead, she was willing to make the highest advantage of him; so she told him she could divulge nothing just now; but that if he would be at a certain spot, at seven o'clock that evening, she would meet him.

He just now, for the first time, recollected that the errand he was going upon was of the utmost consequence, and in great haste; so he promised he would.

“Stop, Mr. Lacket,” said she, “how am I to know that you will?”

“I promise you that I will,” said he.

“That won't do, sir,” said she: —

“ give me five pounds, — I shall save you hundreds.”

Five pounds ! What was he doing ?— making an assignation to meet a woman he knew nothing about, and give her five pounds ! Oh, no ; that was out of the question.

The wily woman saw what was passing in his mind ; and so ably did she recapitulate evils, his fear of which she had gathered from the simple man’s own questions to herself, that he again quaked for fear.

He told her that he had only two pounds about him, and was in haste. These she took ; and they mutually promised to be there in the evening.

He then hastened to transact the business he was going about ; and whether it was that his mind was occupied, or from any other cause, he neglected half of it, and returned to the office, where, upon being interrogated by his lordship respecting his message, he received a

severer reprimand than had ever hitherto been offered him.

“ Mr. Lacket, I sent you about this affair, because it was of the utmost consequence ; and I was certain you would not fail me. I must now, though with extreme inconvenience, go myself.”

“ I’m very sorry, sir,” returned the conscious messenger ; “ I’ll go back immediately.”

“ No, sir,” replied his lordship, coldly ; “ I could be back in half the time you have taken : and besides, how do I know that you will not again return with only half what is necessary I should know instantly ?” And, saying this, he took up his hat, and went himself.

Mr. Lacket was in agony. It was very evident, now, that all the woman had hinted to him was about to be realised ; — he saw nothing but disgrace before him. What could he say to Mr. Fanshaw ? — what to Mr. Barlow ?

While all these were passing in this

poor man's self-agitated mind, a strange scene was passing at his house.

The woman, seeing how extraordinary were her powers of hoaxing, thought she would try if his wife was as credulous as himself; so she hastened home, changed her dress, and went to Great George-street, where she confidently rapped at the door; and hearing the lady was within, she desired the servant to announce Mrs. Chamberlain, and she followed him up stairs.

Mrs. Lacket rose, and received her as a stranger; but thought it likely she was some acquaintance of her husband, come to pay rather a late wedding visit. She was a very fine fashionable woman, and she was very courteous to her.

As soon as the man had withdrawn,—
“I called, madam,” said the lady, with great hesitation, and apparent emotion,
“upon a business which, alas! concerns you as much as myself, although we are in very different situations. Perhaps you

have heard Mr. Lacket speak of Mrs. Chamberlain?"

Mrs. Lacket did not recollect ever having heard the name before.

"Perhaps not, madam," said her visitor; "for though men brag to each other of their misdeeds, I do not think they are apt to make their wives their confidants. You, madam, are the happy wife of Mr. Lacket, — long may you be so. I —, I am — no, I am not now, but I have been —" and she burst into tears — "his mistress!"

Mrs. Lacket started. "Mr. Lacket's mistress!" said she: "impossible! I won't believe a word of it." And she added, with great resolution, while she rose, "If, madam, you have nothing better to tell me than this tale, which I don't believe, I request you will shorten your visit. If the story is true, it is better I should be ignorant of it; — if false, the less I have to do with the in-

ventor the better.” She then laid her hand on the bell.

“ Stay, stay, madam,—I conjure you, stay,” said the impostor, in great agitation, “ I am not the depraved woman you think me ; and had I money enough to convey myself and his dear child to Ireland, I would never trouble you more. It is only owing to my having obstinately refused the visits of Mr. Lacket, that I am now reduced to the humiliation of begging from his wife ; — but I could not bear the depravity of living with a married man.”

“ I will not, I cannot believe you,” said Mrs. Lacket ; although she did not feel herself quite comfortable.

Sir John Neerdowel had a much more plausible manner than her husband, and yet he deceived them all ; and she began to have some doubts if men were not “ deceivers ever.”

The elegant lady seemed to tremble with emotion as she said, “ To con-

vince you, madam, much as I wished to spare you and myself the confession, I must give you proof. These two pounds I have just extorted from your husband; but it was only upon condition that I gave him my solemn promise of meeting him this evening in the park that I got them. I hesitated a long while, but my poor boy wants comforts, indeed, absolute necessities. I have parted with my clothes to support him, poor babe! and when I received these notes, I thought I would bring them to you, and try to interest you for us. — It is in your power to prevent this meeting, or indeed any future one: give me only ten pounds, and I will leave England for ever. I have friends in Ireland, who, if I could only see and speak to, they would, I am certain, forgive and receive me back; but if I stay here, nothing but disgrace and infamy await me.”

Mr. Lacket had drawn thirty pounds

that morning, and had given her twenty-eight to pay a bill, and kept two for himself. They were new notes, and when she compared the numbers of the two the woman gave her with those she had, she found they followed : — this was indeed a corroboration which the impostor never dreamt of. The woman watched her in silence while she examined them, and perceiving her change countenance, she followed up her advantage, without indeed fully knowing what that advantage was.

“ Indeed, madam,” said she, “ I am not imposing upon you ; and if you want farther evidence, only watch if Mr. Lacket does not go to the Park.”

“ Good woman,” said the unhappy wife, “ I want no more proof, but that of your sincerity in leaving London instantly, and never letting me hear of you again.”

“ And will you furnish me the means? Oh, madam ! surely you are an angel,

and I shall have to thank the wife of my seducer for my return to virtue."

"I would rather," said Mrs. Lacket, "send you the money; I will speak to my husband at dinner, and I promise you, if you will leave me your address, to send you the money to-morrow."

"Alas! madam," said the woman, "you know not what you promise, or what you risk; pardon me, if I probe you farther. — I have known your husband before you did — I knew him when he went to Southampton; and he told me then, that although his wants were such as to render his marriage absolutely necessary, yet his heart would always be mine, and your fortune would enable him to make me comfortable."

"Well, well, my good woman, let me hear no more — there are ten pounds, and may you thrive according as you act honestly by me." Thus saying, she laid ten notes on the table — the woman's hand touched her's as she took them —

Mrs. Lacket seemed to thrill with horror from the contact.

The woman took them up, and after many blessings and prayers, "left poor Mrs. Lacket as miserable an object as could be conceived. At one instant she thought her husband beneath her affection ; — she would go to her father as her sister had done, and never think of him again ; the next moment, however, so many instances of genuine kindness and love presented themselves to her mind, that she would not believe a word to his disadvantage ; and she called herself to a severe account for her credulity. — Ten pounds was a large sum, but what woman would not sacrifice that, and a great deal more, to get rid of a rival in the heart of her husband ? Would to Heaven, she thought, that the loss of the money was all she had to suffer — but she determined to tell him all at dinner-time ; for it was misery to continue a

minute longer in suspense than she could help.

When, however, he came home, his brow was ruffled, and his face gloomy, — he spoke little, and he ate less. When the things were removed, she tried to enter into conversation with him; but his head was full of the disasters that were in store for him, and of the plot he was to hear of in the evening — and he appeared absent and uneasy: — this then was surely not the humour to take him in, when she wished to engage his heart and his mind in the conversation. So she became as silent as he was — she took a book, he the newspaper; and her watchful eye soon detected, that though he held it before him, he was not reading it — he put it down — pulled out his watch — walked about the room — then sat down and drank a glass of wine, and again took up the newspaper; but he was so restless, he could not sit still: — again he looked at his watch, and before

the appointed hour, left the room, saying he should be back soon, and she heard the street-door shut after him.

All then was true: — how could she be such a fool as to doubt it? Had she not proof enough in the notes? and could any one disbelieve the evidence of their senses? She would go to Highgate to-morrow, and lay the whole before her father. As for watching her husband, that was a degradation she could never condescend to stoop to. She sat, then, in great agitation for an hour, which in her estimation was the longest she had ever passed.

A short time after he returned home, tired, and too much disordered himself to observe the distress of his wife. For the first time they met without speaking; but finding silence too painful, she rose, and went to her dressing-room, where she freely indulged her tears.

Two hours after, he followed her up stairs, and found she had not yet gone

to bed ; he opened her door, and great was his consternation at seeing her sitting there, weeping as if her heart would break.

He earnestly intreated she would tell him what was the cause of such agitation.

At first she refused to assign any reason, and begged him to go away, and not to mind her; yet her sobs were quite convulsive — “ My dear Ellen, that’s impossible,” cried he, with great concern, “ until you tell me what has afflicted you — what has happened ? Have you had any letter ? for God’s sake don’t keep me in suspense, I really am plagued enough already — I intreat you not to add to my vexation. Come,” said he, putting his arm round her, “ tell me what affects you ?”

“ I may answer you,” sobbed out his wife, somewhat haughtily, “ by asking a question in my turn — pray where have you been this evening ?”

“Where!” answered he, in some hesitation, “why really I am ashamed to own, even to myself, where I have been—I never shall forgive myself for being so swindled, so duped.”

“What then! the lady you expected disappointed you, did she, sir?” asked his wife, in a tone of bitter reproach.

“Yes, indeed, Ellen, she did,” replied her husband; “the woman never came, and I had been fool enough to give her two pounds in the morning to secure her attendance.”

“For shame, Mr. Lacket,” said his wife, “is it to me you tell these abominable things?”

“I must not only own it to you, but I must confess my folly to the world; for if I live, I’ll go to Mr. Birnie to-morrow morning, and find the jade, let her be where she will.”

“You may spare yourself and Mr. Birnie the trouble, sir; the woman is far enough from your reach. But I won-

der how you came to marry me, having such a connection as that upon your hands."

"In mercy, Ellen, tell me what you are talking about! and of what connection are you speaking, that should prevent me from marrying you, — what have I done to make you thus offended?"

"What you, sir, may think nothing more than fashionable levity; but my father, sir, may teach you another lesson."

It may be observed, that Mrs. Lacket's tears were now ceasing, as her eloquence was beginning, — a sort of indignant pride, and injured feeling,

"Did the time more benefit."

"Ellen," said Mr. Lacket, "you are trifling most cruelly with me — tell me what do you know about that infernal witch; for I declare I don't think she is of this world?"

"I don't know who should know, if you do not!" said she; "but as you insist

upon my telling you what I know, you shall hear all."

She then told him the whole transaction of the morning — her memory being faithful to every incident. She watched his countenance as she spoke ; but when she came to the confession of the woman being his mistress, his amazement was inexpressible.

" My mistress !" exclaimed he ; " my dearest Ellen, how could you for an instant believe so gross a tale ! so palpable an imposition ! I found quite difficulty enough in supporting myself until I got into office ; and since then, Ellen, I think *you* might have given me more credit, than to suppose me guilty from the mere assertion of a woman you had never seen before. But go on, pray let me hear all."

She then spoke of the child — he was half wild with rage ; but when she mentioned the two pound notes, he was thunderstruck. It was then the same

woman, the gypsey who had swindled him, that came with the infamous tale to her : and, by the description of her person, the idea occurred that this was the very woman who had dodged him in the theatre and going home. He vowed tenfold vengeance against her — she had got thirteen pounds of his money, and, what in his estimation was much worse, she had given his wife and himself a great deal of uneasiness.

He then proceeded to tell his story ; and the theatre scene being now brought to his recollection, he began with that, and candidly told all. In the course of it, she gaily repeated his own words : “ My dearest Edward, how could you for an instant believe so gross a tale ! so palpable an impostion ? ”

He burst out a laughing, and caught his charming wife to his bosom ; yet it required all her art to sooth his irritation against himself.

Had he told his wife, in the first in-

stance, of the Cyprian lady, and his rencontre with the gypsy, her judgment, which had no fancied grievances to bias it, would instantly have detected the imposition ; and, thus put upon her guard, she would not have been so liable to be duped herself ; — their money and their peace would have been their own.

“ And so, my dear Edward,” said she, greatly relieved from the load which had oppressed her, “ as neither of us can find fault with the other, let us think it a cheaply bought lesson. Never let us have secrets from each other. If this were the general practice, there would be much less unhappiness in this world : — the libraries, indeed,” added she playfully, “ would be ruined ; for if there were no secrets, there could be few catastrophes, and no catastrophes no heroines ; and this, I confess, would be a sad deprivation to me, for I think nothing more entertaining than a good novel.”

CHAP. XII.

I do desire you not to deny this imposition.

Merchant of Venice.

Effrontery.

THE next morning Mr. and Mrs. Lacket breakfasted rather earlier than usual, and set off on foot for Bow-street, where information was laid against the lady swindler ; and a full description given of her person.

Mr. Birnie had no doubt the two women who had favoured Mr. Lacket, and the one who was so conscientious to his wife, were one and the same person. Necessary instructions were given for her apprehension.

Mr. Lacket then took his wife home, and hastened to the office, where he found much business waiting him : he

got through it quite to the satisfaction of Lord ———. A dispatch arrived, which required an immediate answer : — there was no time to write, and he was sent to make some verbal enquiries which required collectedness and foresight.

Mr. Lacket meeting no gypsey in his way, performed his mission so well, that he was told, “ Aye, aye, sir, I find we have our old acquaintance Mr. Lacket come back again. I don’t know what I should do, if my right-hand man was to fail me.”

This put our poor hero quite at ease, and plainly showed there was no plot — no jealousies afloat against him. But no doubt he would find many future occasions to apprehend them ; for a fanciful disposition always finds food with which to pall itself.

The emissaries of justice were hunting a fortnight ere they discovered the culprit ; but then she was taken at the entrance of the theatre.

Mr. Lacket being apprised of the presence of the lady, hastened early the next morning to Bow-street, and there saw his incog. veil and all. She refused to give any account of herself; and when asked if she had ever visited a lady in Great George-street, nothing could induce her to answer. She objected to unveil; and as Mr. Lacket had not seen her face, it was supposed not of much consequence.

Silence, however, soon became irksome to the lady; — it was certainly not one of her attributes. And, upon some judicious question being put by the worthy magistrate, which did not quite suit her gentle temper, she burst into a rage; and in order to give force to the severe reprimand she destined for Mr. Birnie, she gave a flourish with her hand, which brought down the already untied veil, and discovered — Mrs. Desburgh! whom the astonished Mr. Lacket remem-

bered at Southampton, — Sophy Denison, — and of whom he had heard so much since.

“ Mrs. Desburgh !” exclaimed he ; “ is it possible I see you here ? — the wife of Colonel Desburgh in such a situation as this !”

“ Quite possible, Mr. Lacket,” pertly answered the undaunted fair One.

“ Colonel Desburgh !” said the magistrate : “ surely this woman is not the wife of that good man, who is the friend of every one who needs one, — the benefactor of so many soldiers’ orphans and widows ! Surely no woman could be so abandoned, who once had the honour of belonging to him !”

Mrs. Desburgh, with the utmost effrontery, said she was sorry to teach Mr. Birnie his duty, which was, not to pre-judge the case by talking of what was irrelevant to it. “ And now,” added she, with a levity quite out of character

with her situation, “since, gentlemen, you know who I am, I suppose I may be at liberty to go?”

“By no means, madam,” answered Mr. Birnie; “I shall beg leave to teach you, that I am so well aware of my duty as to detain you; and that I think the higher the situation in life, the greater the disgrace of misconduct, and of course the greater degree of punishment should be attached: you will find that I shall be more rigorous with you than with those who have had fewer advantages.”

It is now necessary we should take a short sketch of the life Mrs. Desburgh had led since we last saw her, by which she had so greatly improved in modesty. As soon as Colonel Desburgh had left her, at six o'clock in the morning, to go to his attorney's, after the catastrophe of the preceding night, she obeyed his injunctions, and packed up her clothes, considering all the time what should be their destination.

She left her occupation in the middle, to write to Sir John Neerdowel, for it was now no time to upbraid him with his desertion of her ; and requested to see him instantly, as the “ old One ” was safe. And she expected, he would have flown to her on the wings of love ; although, we fear, we must acknowledge, that the lady had had instances enough of his growing indifference, if she had chosen to see them.

When the messenger returned with the news that Sir John and his servant Argusson had just set off, — *where* the footman could not tell, as no orders were left, — anger was the first emotion of her mind. But he was now her only sheet-anchor : — she must either follow him to Ireland, where she had no doubt he was gone ; or her husband to Wales.

Now the truth is, that Sophy really did like Sir John. He was, by comparison, the handsomest, and the most

elegant man she had ever seen, — universally admired by all the ladies, — their very idol.

It is the most difficult thing in the world to persuade a woman that the man she loves no longer regards her, or, in other words, is tired of her; particularly when she is determined to think otherwise: and the question at issue now was between a young, gay, delightful man, with his pocket full of money, (as she supposed,) and who parted with it freely, — or a mouldy Welsh castle, which her lively fancy had pictured almost insulated in the ocean, from which her chief amusement would be to count the waves as they beat against its base. — Very interesting this to most heroines, but, alas! it suited not the temper of ours. So she hastened her packages, and set off to the Bear Inn, and there learnt that a coach, which communicated with one from Holyhead, would leave Bath in

two hours,—she secured her place in the name of Mrs. Chamberlain.

On her road home, she recollected that, as she would now be going into gay life, a few ornaments and smart dresses would be no incumbrance ; so she went to Mrs. Gardener, her milliner, and bought such articles as suited her, and were ready made, and desired her bill might be sent in the following day, when it would be discharged. And she did the same at the jeweller's who had supplied the Colonel with the rings for the christening of his son. Both of these well knew the veteran, and would have trusted her to a much larger amount than she took credit for. The latter articles she carried home herself, and the former were there before her.

She then ate a good breakfast, and sending for porters, her baggage was placed on the coach, and she in it, and away she went.

At the different inns where they stopped, she learnt that a gentleman and his servant had passed in a chaise-and-four some hours ago. • Thus assured, she placed herself as comfortably as she could, and took as sound a nap, as if she had been soothed to sleep by the snoring of her husband.

Upon her embarkation, the first person she saw was Argusson, who immediately went below to inform his master of Mrs. Desburgh's presence, and he very ungratefully wished her at the devil :—however, he went up to her, and stood the brunt of her reproaches with a great deal of patience.

He well knew Sophy's temper, and had had proofs enough of her violence, to wish to prevent an effervescence of it before so many witnesses. She was easily soothed, and they assured each other of their mutual regard and affection, and that they should part no more ; an assurance Sir John meant to break upon

the very first opportunity. They took lodgings, and led a very dissipated life for some weeks, at the end of which he introduced her to a Mr. Dornford, who informed her, that he had a few days since seen her sister at Birmingham, whom, excepting herself, he thought the finest woman he had ever seen.

He was now their constant companion, and Sir John took care to leave them much together. One day he was away somewhat longer than usual, and she learnt from a letter he left for her, that Argusson and himself had given her the slip, and set off for England, being, as he said, under the fear of an arrest for debt. He advised her to make the most of his friend Dornford, who was rich, and could afford to support her handsomely, while for himself, he was a ruined man.

Sophy had by this time learnt the truth of the assertion, that "no man is a hero to his valet de chambre." Mr. Dornford too had taught her to see the

heartlessness of his friend; so she took that friend's advice, and made herself agreeable to him. They lived very gaily together, — she passing by the name of Chamberlain, — until she thought she detected symptoms of coolness on the part of her new swain. But she had now learnt a lesson from that able master, Experience; and again profiting by the advice Sir John had given her, she determined to *make the most* of him. She collected all she could gather of his valuable portable property, such as a watch, rings, brooches, &c. &c.; and watching her opportunity, left the house when she heard there was a packet upon the point of sailing, and made her way by a circuitous route to London, where she had been about a week, when she saw Mr. Lacket at the theatre. But not wishing to be detected by any one she knew of Mr. Dornford's friends, or by himself, she had always been cautious

of appearing, and was generally closely veiled.

Her means, however, becoming somewhat scanty, and knowing Mr. Lacket to be easily intimidated, she determined to make him the first object for the trial of her powers of deception, believing that, even if she was detected, her rank in life would secure her from exposure ; and if that would not do, she resolved to apply to the Colonel for support and protection. For this purpose she laid herself out to inveigle him.

Finding him proof against temptation, she was bent upon trying to match him other ways. She made herself mistress of as much as she could gather of his concerns and situation, and got up the gypsy scene for the purpose of his edification ; and finding him more easily gulled than she had dared to hope, she became confident of her own abilities, and was encouraged to try if his wife was as

readily managed. With her, however, she found she had a much more difficult card to play, and was very near seconding the kind wish of Sir John Neerdowel in her behalf, when her victim found out the numbers of the bank notes. She saw the instant change in her countenance, and, as we have seen, made her advantage of it. But fearing an explanation must take place between them at dinner-time, she dared not commit herself by meeting him according to her engagement; yet she could not resist the satisfaction of watching for him: and when she saw him cooling his heels in the Park, and peeping in every direction for his swarthy companion, it was with difficulty she forbore entertaining herself at his expense, and speaking to him.

She flattered herself, however, that he would be so much ashamed of his weakness, as to let the matter sleep, and she kept out of the way for a fortnight: but her own reflections not being the most

pleasing companions in the world, and feeling herself a perfect sceptic in Zimmermann's precepts, she sallied forth once more to the theatre, where she was unceremoniously laid hold of.

The only punishment she meditated was the terrible Welsh castle ; for of a trial by judge and jury she never dreamt ; on the contrary, she expected to make her auditors laugh at the easy credulity of the couple she had duped. But she did not like the appearance of things at Bow-street, and felt very uncomfortable under the lash of Mr. Birnie's observation.

Mrs. Desburgh had judged perfectly well ; Mr. Lacket was quite averse from proceeding against her without consulting his patron. He accordingly begged the lady might be treated with all the comforts she could, until he could hear from Mr. Fanshaw, to whom he instantly wrote ; and *he*, affectionately alive to any thing which could interest the veteran, immediately set off for the Rectory, where

he found the old man teaching his boy to shoulder a wooden gun, and quite enchanted with the child's quickness and alacrity, declared, " 'Fore George, he'd be a general before he was forty."

Mr. Fanshaw then took him aside, not choosing that poor Mrs. Reynolds' feelings should be lacerated by the knowledge of the depravity of her sister: he then tenderly and delicately informed him of the news he had received. The Colonel was greatly affected; but benevolence was the main-spring of his actions, and he busied himself in devising all manner of plans to bring his guilty wife to repentance. He immediately accompanied his excellent friend to town, and there found, that Mr. Birnie had, with great delicacy, ordered the delinquent to be privately confined.

All the gentlemen concerned now held a consultation, the result of which was, that Mr. Lacket should appear to proceed against her with the greatest severity,

in which the worthy magistrate, who willingly lent himself to the Colonel's wishes, should second him; but that every thing should be carried on with strict privacy, and that no friend should appear to interest themselves, until some signs of repentance were perceptible.

The Colonel would fain have flattered himself that less rigorous measures would suffice, but her conduct since her apprehension had shown him the futility of that hope. She saw the indulgence with which she was treated, and presuming upon it, dared any one to proceed against her.

She had written to the Colonel under cover to Mr. Fanshaw, not knowing where he was; but of course these letters were never sent, but put into the gentlemen's hands, who were ill pleased with the levity with which they were written. To these she waited in vain for answers; but her spirit did not fail her until she saw Mr. Lacket bind himself

over to prosecute her ; then all the miseries of imprisonment, of which she had already had much more than suited her taste, or her health, (for the life she had led for many months past had materially injured *that*,) and the disgrace of a public trial unsupported by friends, presented themselves in grim array to her imagination.

The benevolent magistrate watched her countenance, and observing her emotion took her aside, when he painted all these scenes in the most appalling point of view ; and to these he added the horrors of a convict-ship, on which he dilated with great truth, assuring her that no picture he could draw could portray half the misery of it ; but from this, if once convicted, she had no chance of escape ; — no interest of his could save her. In short, he took so judicious a method with her, that her audacity forsook her ; she fell at his feet, and with great humility besought him to save her ; im-

plored him to write to Colonel Desburgh, who, she was sure, would not let her be tried. The excellent magistrate told her it was rather of the latest to think of that now ; for though the Colonel's interest would go far in many things, yet justice, not interest, prevailed in court. But he advised her to write herself such a letter as her present feelings would dictate, for that no doubt *that* she had written would militate against rather than promote her suit with him. If she could once get him to exert himself with Mr. Lacket, it might yet be possible to save her. The repentant fair One wrote the letter, which the Colonel answered, saying that he suspected the application was made rather in the fear of punishment, than the repentance of error ; but that he had prevailed with Mr. Lacket so far as to *delay* the prosecution, giving her time to evince the sincerity of her repentance, by her change

of conduct, and according to that test she would be dealt with.

The Colonel, who had communicated all this to Mrs. Barclay, at whose house he took up his abode, consulted her in every thing: she procured lodgings at the house of the servant of the Colonel, where she and her sister had been placed by him, for Mrs. Desburgh; giving the man and his wife a hint to keep an eye upon her. She then went herself, and took her out of confinement, and placed her with them, telling her that she had full authority from the Colonel to give her every comfort, while she deserved it.

This excellent woman visited her every day, and she was indefatigable in endeavouring to bring her to some sense of religion and her duty; but the dissolute and abandoned society she had kept, and the little trouble which had ever been taken to initiate her in her moral duties, did not greatly second her endeavours

or facilitate her purpose ; and it was left to Charles Reynolds to repay the many obligations he owed the Colonel by forwarding the first wish of his heart, the conversion of his guilty wife.

The veteran wrote to him upon the first symptom of repentance, and he lost no time in hastening to town, and visiting his sister-in-law. He was greatly shocked by the alteration he saw in her — her beauty was nearly lost in her jaded and emaciated appearance. He delicately forbore all allusion to the past, until he found he had gained some weight in her estimation ; and then, instead of thundering out anathemas, and threats of everlasting perdition for the guilty, he excited a reliance on the mercy of the Deity, who “ forgiveth our sins even to the seventieth time seven.”

By this mode he engaged her reason rather than her passions, and thus laid the foundation of repentance, through the medium of confidence and hope, upon a

much more durable basis, than could be built upon her feelings, which were as volatile as they were warm.

The good old veteran too showed that he partook of the Divine attribute of mercy; he forgave his repentant wife, and settled two hundred a year upon her. Mrs. Reynolds passed a week with her, and no effort was spared to make her comfortable. But although reclaimed from past transgressions, she felt the irksomeness of a solitary life; and, conscious that she could never again be received within the pale of respectable society, her spirits gradually sunk; and as her constitution had been sadly impaired by her dissipation, it gave way. Possibly no punishment could have been more severe to Sophy, than that of living alone and retired.

The veteran and his friends returned home, the former satisfied with himself and his companion, but Mrs. Reynolds suffered greatly; and by her own extreme

good conduct to her husband and children, and attention to the Colonel, whom she dearly loved, she endeavoured to make up for the depravity of her sister.

CHAP. XIII.

Men can counsel and give comfort to that grief
Which they themselves not feel : but tasting it,
Their counsel turns to passion.

Much Ado about Nothing.

Repentance.

SOME time after Miss Dennison had left Mrs. Langton at Cheltenham, that lady lost her card-society, whom she had pretty well pigeoned, and a much more knowing set succeeded ; however, she won so constantly whenever she betted high upon her own play, that suspicion arose as to her fairness. But as no stranger liked to be the first to attach dishonour to so beautiful a creature, they dropped off one by one, till at last it was difficult for her to make up her table. They then began to compare notes at another.

One said his reason for deserting that table was, that he did not choose to play against such odds ; for though he flattered himself he played well, yet he was not so *successful* a player as the lady, and he laid a great emphasis on the word.

Another said he could always beat the lady when she did not bet, but that he believed the very act of betting brought her luck.

A third, a clergyman, said if he could pique himself upon any thing, it was upon his scientific knowledge of whist, which he had made his chief study for years ; but that he found himself no match for her.

Agreeing so well in the main point, they now came to particulars. Each confessed that they suspected she had some trick, and a plan was formed to detect her. The next day she easily made up her party ; but there were too many bystanders, so she took no bets, and she lost most of the rubbers.

The same scheme was laid three successive days with the like success, — nothing was discovered. On the fourth the observers thought it rather dull work, and proposed another table, which they made up. Mrs. Langton immediately offered to bet; suspicions were renewed, — her offer was taken, — the other rubber was delayed, and the gentlemen waited at some distance anxiously watching the event. They soon observed her shuffle was very peculiar, and quite different when making the cards for her own deal, or for that of her right-hand neighbour; but they could make nothing of that. Some time afterwards they detected her in something so very unfair, that they remarked it to each other, — they were at a particular point, and they won the game.

Satisfied as our by-standers were themselves, they waited a recurrence of the circumstance, ere they made it public.

A gentleman, who was her partner, and the clergyman, who played against her,

looked at their observing friends, and two or three minutes afterwards they both rose from their seats, and openly taxed her with unfair play. The lady expostulated,—it was a mistake, an inadvertency — nobody could suppose that she could be so dishonourable. The bystanders immediately came forwards, and said it was not the first time she had resorted to the shameful expedient. And now there was a great commotion in the room, which was crowded, and all who were not too anxious in their own game flocked to this table, so that the transaction was perfectly notorious, and the fair One was glad to make her escape, with still more shame than a lame duck from the Stock Exchange.

. The circumstance soon got wind, and the lady, like Mr. Lacket, found Cheltenham the most disagreeable place in the world. She determined to leave it, and having been tolerably successful, and very economical, as she generally was

when upon her own hands, she found herself possessed of a sum which she thought would enable her to pass the winter in town. She accordingly took her place in the stage-coach, (the elegant Mrs. Langton! the *ci-devant* Mrs. Davenport in a stage coach!) for the next morning.

When she placed herself in it, she saw in the opposite corner a very sanctified looking man, whom she regarded with great contempt, and spoke not. He, however, knew her. He was a methodist parson, who had been sanctifying the well-disposed, showering down "vital sparks" upon the "elect," and seeking proselytes amongst those profane persons, who were impious enough to read the "Devil's books." He had for this philanthropic purpose trusted his saintly person in the "hot-bed of vice," — the card-room; and had been present at the time when Mrs. Langton had cut so very conspicuous a figure. Fain would

he have delivered an *extrumpory* exordium on the spot upon the sin of card-playing ; but he had just sense enough to discover, that the minds of the company were somewhat otherwise engaged, and that it was useless to preach sobriety in the temple of Bacchus. But the next day, when he went to the schism shop to take leave of his admiring hearers, he took the opportunity of recounting the whole event, making that his text, from which no doubt his auditors took warning, and avoided the heinous sin of playing a game of sixpenny whist with their neighbours.

He immediately recognised his travelling companion ; but he had been much too insignificant to attract her notice : he soon, however, opened his budget of rhapsody : at first she took little notice of him, but he spòke to her passions, and soon interested them, and captivated her attention.

She was now subdued by recent morti-

fication and public scorn, and her mind was in fine order to receive the blessed seed he sowed.

Before they reached town, he had so successfully wrought upon her imagination, that she became his convert ; and after a few visits from him, and an introduction to the “ serious community,” she became a perfect enthusiast. The religion was well suited to her strong passions and weak judgment. She was told that it was her duty to her neighbours to convert as many as she could ; and being a fervent disciple, she wrote to request Miss Dennison would join her : but Eliza was now thoroughly depressed.

When Mr. Fanshaw went to the Rectory to inform the Colonel of his wife’s detention, she dared not meet his eye ; yet she waited in her chamber, hoping, rather than expecting, he would enquire for her. But, two hours after, she saw the veteran get into his carriage, and they drove off together ; without, as

she afterwards learnt, ever mentioning her name.

It was impossible, too, that she could go to town without seeing her sister ; and this would be a fresh mortification. She wrote, therefore, to say, that in the present state of her spirits, she could not meet her in town ; but if she would go to any quiet sea-bathing place, she would join her there.

Mrs. Langton, in her violent religious zeal, had been persuaded, that by giving large donations to the pious dissenters, she was making her peace with Heaven ; and these offerings liquidated most of her savings at Cheltenham.

She became a rigid economist ; but there was one of two things which she could not live without : — either she must have *an affair* upon her hands, or she must attend the 'card-table. She consulted her pious instructor, who told her, that if she could make a convert, *that*, to be sure, would cover much sin ; and if she

conscientiously appropriated all her winnings at cards to the good of their community, *that* bought its own pardon. — What a convenient doctrine !

She appointed to meet Eliza at Brighton, whither she went ; and she had not been there two days ere she met her husband, Colonel Langton, who was driving a very elegant woman in his dashing curricule. He recognised her immediately, and drove up to her, — stopped his horses, — declared he was glad to see her, — hoped she was come to stay at Brighton, where they were exceedingly gay, — asked where she lived, for that he would call upon her, — and wished her a good morning.

All this was done with so much ease, that a casual observer would have thought they were common acquaintances. But shortly after, the Colonel met one who really did make him feel.

Mrs. Barclay's great relations hearing, or at least believing now, for the first

time, (for she was poor before,) that she was a charming woman, had resolved to do her the honour of noticing her. Those, particularly, who had families were studiously attentive to her; and she was invited to go to Brigton with Lord Francis Dennavon and his wife, who was her first cousin. -- Colonel Langton was intimate at the house.

The day after her arrival, as the family were met in the drawing-room before dinner, the door opened, and Colonel Langton appeared. There had ever been a strong resemblance between Mrs. Barclay and her sister. The Colonel saw her, and he saw no one else. He put his hands to his face, and exclaimed, in extreme emotion, "Good God! does Fanny Robertson really live!"

Mrs. Barclay was exceedingly discomposed. The Colonel threw himself on a seat, and again looked at her. She soon recovered herself; and being a woman of strong nerve and resolution, acquired

firmness enough to say, “No, sir, my angel sister died of a broken heart, — a disease you can never know : — but this room, or this house, or even this place, must never hold you and myself at the same time. Go, sir,” added she, in a sharp voice, “and take care never to turn my sight again !”

“I obey you, madam,” said he ; “but I declare to you, before this company, and before all the world, that I have never known a day’s happiness since I left that angel, — never loved another woman.”

“Go, sir,” returned Mrs. Barclay, “make your peace with God, for a baser transaction never sullied the days of man.”

Colonel Langton rose and went up to her, “Say you forgive me, then,” said he, “and I am gone.”

“For myself, sir,” said she, “for the ills you occasioned me individually, I freely forgive you ; but for that saint

in heaven ! for my poor Fanny !— O no, don't ask that ; it is too much, too much," repeated she, as she burst into tears, and left the room.

The Colonel was scarcely less agitated. He offered his hand to Lord Francis Donnavon, — " Don't hate me," said he, very quickly, " God knows there is no earthly sacrifice I would not gladly make to redeem those days. Adieu," and he hastened out of the house, leaving the company in great amazement.

The Colonel had visited them for some years, — they had often been told how dissipated he was ; but he was a pleasant companion, and a perfect gentleman ; and his lordship was heard to say, " Give me a man's manners, as for his heart or his conscience, let him look to that, *I* have nothing to do with the one or the other."

Mrs. Barclay joined them at table with tolerable calmness, and afterwards she gave them the history of her poor

sister, which taught his lordship, that as the circumstance had happened to a near relative of his wife, it was impossible he could henceforth be received as a visitor at their house.

In the evening a very penitent letter was received by Mrs. Barclay, and another by Lord Donnavon, from Colonel Langton, stating, that as he knew he could not be admitted as hitherto, he begged to express his great regret for the loss of their society, and his deep contrition at the cause of it.

The next morning Mrs. Langton sat expecting a visit from her husband, and being bent upon making proselytes to her new and convenient religion, determined to begin with him; and as none made such good methodists as those who had been the greatest sinners, she considered him a fine object for conversion; she therefore busied herself in collecting those invincible arguments which had been so successful with herself: while

she was thus industriously employed, the object of all these kind intentions was driving as fast as he could to another part of the kingdom ; but his conscience went with him. His wife, however, disappointed of converting him, was resolved all her fine reasonings should not be lost ; she therefore hailed Eliza's arrival with pleasure, and the next morning displayed all her eloquence to her astonished friend.

Eliza looked at her to find out whether she might laugh at her rhapsody, but observing her perfectly grave and serious, she listened as patiently as she could. Seeing, however, no end to her exordium, and finding her friend a perfect devotee, she soon tired of her companion, and her mind being much too strong for the reception of such folly, she was not sorry to be called off, after a fortnight's stay, although it was to attend her sister's children, while she went to town to see Mrs. Desburgh, who was ill.

Colonel Desburgh, who had left his wife in what was considered great comfort, was distressed to hear from Mrs. Barclay, on her return from Brighton, that she had been concerned that morning to observe the alteration which had taken place in her during her short absence. He, with Mrs. Reynolds and the child, hastened to town, and visited his wife. He was shocked to observe evident symptoms of a rapid decline.

Mrs. Barclay had, with the greatest kindness, removed her to her own house; — there too the Colonel went, and took his station daily by her bed-side. Mrs. Reynolds and the child had lodgings in the neighbourhood, as the large house in Albemarle-street had been given up, and a smaller one in Harley-street taken.

Here again we find our dear old veteran, the most attentive, the most affectionate of nurses. He rose by five o'clock in the morning, and went to Covent Garden market, to have the first choice of

grapes and other fruits for her ; and if he left her during the day, it was merely to procure her some delicacy, or a soother for her alarming cough.

With the usual fluctuation of this flattering complaint, she was some days so well as to give them all great hopes of her recovery. At these times she rose soon after breakfast, and her spirits seemed to revive.

No allusion was ever made to what was past, and judging by the Colonel's tenderness and attention, any body might have supposed her an angel of purity.

It was thought prudent not to take the child to her, for fear of causing her the least agitation, and she never asked for him. She had fancied herself better for two days, and on the third she was so well that she rose early in the morning. She looked particularly interesting at this time ; her colour was brilliant, and her eyes keen, yet there was the languor of ill health, which forcibly extorted sym-

pathy and interest from every one who saw her. She said she thought she could take an airing.

No sooner did the veteran hear the wish, than he went to all the coach-makers he could think of to find out the easiest carriage for her ; and having met with one which had been built for an invalid, he was very careful to ascertain that it had stood in a dry place, and then he hired it. There was nothing escaped his attention when the least of her comforts was at stake.

When the carriage arrived, she was too ill to go, and it was sent away. She now became cross and fretful ; yet he humoured her in all her whims, and patiently bore all her peevishness.

When he had left his pillow to procure her fruit, she said she was tired of always getting black grapes, why did he not bring her white ones ? Away went the good old man, retracing his steps to the market, and brought the choicest white

ones he could find ; — she could not eat them ; — then she said they were not fresh, and she should have had them at first. The veteran heaved a sigh, but said nothing.

Some days afterwards, the carriage was again ordered. She was now more than usually particular in her dress, and insisted upon ordering new clothes ; and equipped in these, she, attended by Mrs. Barclay, went to the Park, after the Colonel had given the coachman particular instructions what streets were the best paved, and to drive as slowly as possible.

They had driven very leisurely round the Park, and she felt refreshed ; and as the day was very mild, she put down the glass next her. A gentleman rode past, who looked into the carriage : — she instantly recollected Mr. Dornford. He saw her too, and turned his horse round, and addressing Sophia, exclaimed,

“ O ho ! What ! I have found my fair

fugitive at last, after all my search! I thought I could not miss you. Well, my pretty One, will you give me your address, or shall I follow you now? or perhaps you would rather see a more official person?"

But Sophia heard him not. A deathly paleness succeeded to her former hectic colour, and she was perfectly insensible.

Mr. Dornford, though a very dissipated man, was no brute. He stopped the carriage, and was much affected by the situation in which he found her.

Mrs. Barclay's manners instantly assured a stranger, and particularly a man so versed in worldly ways as Mr. Dornford, of her respectability. He made many hasty enquiries, and really appeared interested about her.

Mrs. Barclay gave her card, and he rode off, — not, indeed, with the same spirit as before; for he had received a great shock, and he did not recover it during the morning: — but he found

means to drown any unpleasant recollections of it in copious libations after dinner.

Mrs. Desburgh slowly recovered ; and tears relieved her as they drove leisurely home. The veteran was anxiously looking out for her, and was in readiness to assist her out of the carriage. He instantly saw, and was much grieved at the alteration he observed ; and asked if they drove too fast, or if she was fatigued ; but instead of answering, she sunk upon a seat, and again burst into tears.

The Colonel was inexpressibly shocked ; and while he could hardly master his own emotion, he endeavoured, in the tenderest manner, to sooth her's. He entreated her not to give way to agitation, which must do her harm, and assured her she would soon be better.

“ Ah, no ! ” said she, “ do not say that, — do not think *that* a consolation ; but pray to God that I may be released : for

as long as I remain in this world, every place has its mortification — every hour its distress. I feel a burthen to myself and all around me ; nor dare I trust myself to cast a look at a stranger, lest I meet some accusing countenance. Oh, Desburgh !” added she, in the most touching accents, “you who have passed your long life in the unremitting practice of benevolence to man, and duty to God, can have no idea of the utter wretchedness and the irritation of my mind ; and though I feel how peevish and fretful I am, and how kindly you bear with me, yet I try to suppress my ill-humour as much as possible.”

The veteran, while tears of sensibility traced each other down his benevolent countenance, assured her his affection could easily stand the test of such trifles.

She continued : — “ No punishment this world can inflict can surpass what I have gone through. My mind is in a perpetual state of feverish agitation ; and

had it not been for the excellent precepts of that good man, Reynolds, I should have added suicide to my other crimes. But when I look at the transparency of these poor hands, and mark a clearer shade through them each day, I comfort myself that, through the mercy of the Almighty, my trials are nearly at an end !”

Our amiable veteran could stand this no longer, and he hastened out of the room to indulge his emotion. Mrs. Reynolds, who was present, now attended her poor sister to bed ; and the next day she was dreadfully ill, but the following one she was better again.

While the Colonel was placing her pillows, she told him that all of good she had ever known had been through him ; and but for Charles Reynolds and himself, she had died in infamy. She implored him to keep a steady watch upon Eliza, who, she feared, was not better disposed than she had been. After a

pause, she added, "Perhaps the example of her dying and penitent sister, may have more weight than any admonition."

A wish of Sophy's was now a law. Eliza was immediately sent for; and the invalid found, that while she endeavoured to instil good principles into the mind of another, she herself was more confirmed in them: besides, it was one bright action to plead for her at that tribunal to which she was hastening. She felt her irritation subside, and her spirits composed.

Eliza could not but feel conscious of the propriety of her sister's admonitions; yet she was offended by her presuming to suppose their dispositions were at all similar: and, in fact, there could be no comparison in the strength of their understandings.

Eliza, though more dangerous, was too cautious to commit any glaring impropriety. It was her first wish to settle advantageously, according to the com-

mon acceptation of that word ; and to that one object she bent all her powers. As to pure, genuine affection for any one being, she was quite a stranger to it. Heartless herself, she considered how she could make her friends useful ; and when that was out of their power, she forgot them.

Mrs. Desburgh naturally loved dissipation, and would make every sacrifice to attain it. Thoughtless of consequences, she had ever acted from the impulse of the moment, without once asking herself if that was the road to her interest ; and we have seen how dearly she had already paid for it.

Mr. Dornford sent a note to Mrs. Barclay the next morning, enquiring after the invalid ; and requesting that she would favour him by obtaining, if possible, a chased gold watch, a brooch, and a snuff-box, which he, with great delicacy, said “ Mrs. Desburgh had the care of,” and for which he would not

have troubled her at this painful moment, but that they had belonged to his father, and were, upon many accounts, particularly precious.

Mrs. Barclay wrote to assure him, that if they were in that unfortunate lady's possession, she would be very careful of them for him ; but that in her present dreadful state of suffering, the greatest care was taken by all to divert her mind from dwelling upon past scenes, which excited so much agitation and contrition.

Mrs. Desburgh now made all sorts of arrangements for the long wished-for event of her death ; and when she was relieved from pain, she very affectingly expressed her wish how the funeral should be conducted. She desired it might be as private as possible, — “ on account of my poor sisters,” said she ; “ otherwise, if my history could be a warning to other young women, it ought to be public.”

She said she should like to be carried to the grave by twelve young women, who should relieve each other : — these should be under thirty years of age, and as near her own as possible ; — that she should have no hearse, — no paraphernalia. She begged that Mr. Reynolds might perform the service, and that her husband would attend her to the grave, and have it well watched, that her remains might not be removed.

One evening she spoke of the few things she had in her trunks ; and “ perhaps,” said she, “ this is the best time to confess that there are two pawn-broker’s duplicates : — pray take them, and get some things belonging to Mr. Dornford. There is a watch and snuff-box, which were his father’s, and I know he prized them much. There was also a brooch and two diamond rings ; but these were of his own purchasing, so I sold them ; for indeed,” said she, as if apologizing for the act, “ I was greatly in want at the

time, and had sold every thing that was valuable of my own before I parted with his. But, Desburgh, you will, I am sure, repay them to him :— it will be the last money you will ever be called upon to pay upon my account.”

The veteran affectionately assured her, that if thousands could give her ease, they should be devoted to her disposal ; and asked her if there was any one she wished to remunerate for any kindness done her ?

She answered, no ; that she had received no kindnesses from any one but himself, and she had deserved none from him. “ And now,” said she, “ I should like once more to kiss my poor boy. I have never dared to ask for him, because, young as he is, I don’t wish to familiarize his mind to these events. In aftertimes, it would present itself as a dream to him, that he saw his mother on her dying bed, accusing herself of her infidelity. Besides,” said she, “ every

look of his will be a reproach to me, and I have really dreaded his sight ; but now, I feel very sensibly that I have but few hours to spend amongst you, and I would fain take a last kiss of him.”

Mrs. Reynolds left the room, to fetch the child from her lodgings ; and Sophy took that opportunity of reminding Eliza, that had they taken her advice, they would mutually have been saved many troubles. She then seemed lost in her own recollections, until the child came to her bed-side. She held out her delicate, feeble hand to him, and desired he might be put upon the bed near her ; but the rude urchin was unused to such awful stillness and solemnity as he saw here, he therefore uttered a loud cry, and ran away to the door in disgust : his mother’s eyes followed him, while all present were vexed at his action.

The Colonel vainly endeavoured to coax him back ; but the lad set up a roar, and would not stir.

“Never mind, Desburgh,” said his mother, “it is as it should be, — I must not be too presumptuous. I was going to give him my blessing, but I am unworthy to do so ; yet, if in future times he must know his mother’s guilt, may it be told him rather as a lesson to guard him against vice, than as a motive for abhorring her memory.”

She now asked her sisters to kiss her, then called her husband, and again, with great humility, solicited his forgiveness and his prayers. The amiable old man sobbed aloud, while he affectionately promised her both.

It really appeared by his extreme emotion, that at the age when other men’s feelings are blunted and worn out, his acquired a keener edge. It was a long time before he could command himself sufficiently to give her his blessing ; but when he did it, it was with so much solemnity and fervour, that every one was struck with and affected by it.

She appeared composed, and was soon inclined to doze. They all watched by her with the utmost solicitude and anxiety. She was tranquil, and there was a faint smile upon her pale cheek.

Soon after, Mrs. Reynolds thought she perceived a change in her countenance ; but it was not until they touched her, that they found her spirit had departed from its earthly abode.

CHAP. XIV.

I will marry her upon any reasonable terms.

The Funeral.

THE Colonel was the last to believe the sorrowful truth. He insisted upon having her feet rubbed, and every effort made to reanimate her ; and he stood by, with as much, if not more anxiety, than if his own life depended upon the result. He watched her, confidently expecting every moment would afford a sign of returning life ; but all in vain, — her spirit, purified by repentance and suffering, had been summoned to receive pardon and peace ; — at least, such was the mental prayer of the veteran, while he stood over her lifeless corpse.

He then shut himself up in his room, and was not seen until the next day : then, however, his benevolent countenance was placid and resigned ; he appeared to have made up the matter with himself, and to have no more agitation on the subject.

He gave directions with the utmost composure about the funeral ; wrote himself to Mr. Reynolds, to request him to attend and perform the service ; and to Mr. Fanshaw and Mrs. Trevillyan, to announce the sorrowful intelligence. He took great care that the slightest of her expressed wishes should be minutely attended to :—twelve women were chosen and completely new-dressed at the Colonel's expense ; and although poor Sophia had intended it to have less parade and attraction than a retinue of mourning coaches, yet the novelty and simplicity of the procession drew many spectators, who willingly lent their tribute of sorrow to so young a victim.

The veteran attended her to the grave, where he was accompanied by her sisters and by Mr. Reynolds, who performed the sublime and beautiful service with so much pathos and solemnity, that however much used the attendants were to hear it, and generally with the most unfeeling indifference, there was now not a dry eye amongst them, not a heart that was not,—at least for the moment,—filled with fervent devotion.

Some days afterwards, Mrs. Barclay went with the duplicates to the pawnbroker's, and received possession of the things: she enquired after the rings, and fortunately procured them, after paying three times their original value, and six times more than the unfortunate Sophy had received for them. They were all transferred to their owner, who called some days afterwards to thank Mrs. Barclay for her attention, and to condole with her on the unhappy fate of Mrs. Desburgh. Mr. Lacket received his thir-

teen pounds, with many expressions of thankfulness from the Colonel for his conduct. Nor was the excellent magistrate forgotten ; — our veteran, who was always in the extremes of prodigality or economy, caused a massy piece of plate to be placed upon his sideboard, in the shape of a vase, inscribed, “ A tribute of gratitude to R. Birnie, Esq. for an action of benevolence in his official capacity, which will ever be remembered with gratitude and affection by his old friend, Charles Desburgh.”

These things being accomplished, Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds, and the Colonel, with his boy, returned to the Rectory, where the good old man became more cheerful and more happy than ever they had known him.

Eliza Dennison was invited by Mrs. Barclay to spend some time with her, which she gladly accepted.

Eliza had now had some very severe lessons of affliction, and it certainly had

an effect upon her mind; she became more steady and more rational, and if any thing could reclaim her from scheming and mischief, it was the society of Mrs. Barclay, who to a strong mind and good understanding, added an excellent heart and lady-like manners. She was, too, thoroughly well read, and she used her utmost exertions to lead Eliza to read too: but the time was now past when she could begin these new habits. Had she had the benefit of so excellent an instructress as Mrs. Barclay had in her governess, possibly she might have been as respectable a woman.

There were a great many agreeable families visited in Harley-street, and some few young men, amongst whom was a Mr. Barrington, a solicitor, who greatly admired Miss Dennison; and meeting her one evening at a dance, he was quite captivated by her grace and fine figure. He was however in no situation to marry a dashing girl of small fortune:

he had very little property, and no interest whatever, but he was determined to make his way by industry and good conduct.—This was a very poor offer for Eliza. She consulted Mrs. Barclay, who told her to consider well if she could be content to live upon a small income, which, instead of affording luxuries, would barely yield them sufficient for decent appearances.

The young lady hesitated ; — she confessed she did not like nursing brats or mending stockings ; but then too she did not like living upon sufferance, as she was now doing ; for Mr. Reynolds would accept no compensation for her board ; and she felt that her sister was not thoroughly satisfied with her. Besides, it was so forlorn, — a young woman without any home of her own ! In short, no woman in the world ever wanted an excuse, which satisfied *herself* at least, for marrying, when she chose to do so, let the match be ever so extravagant,

—ever so preposterous and imprudent : still there are always a thousand arguments, — quite unanswerable, — why it should take place. So Eliza thought, and thought till she had persuaded herself that nursing brats was a very pretty amusement, and darning stockings an intellectual repast.

A few months afterwards, therefore, Mr. Barrington led Miss Dennison to the altar ; but instead of the grandeur of the anticipated marriage at Cheltenham with Mr. Melvinton, the carriage and four, with outriders, poor Mrs. Barrington set off in a chaise and pair, alas ! without any servant whatever ; and she afterwards discovered, that however delightful the aforesaid avocations of nursing brats and darning stockings might be in theory, they were by no means agreeable in practice. But Mr. Barrington was a man of rectitude and principle, and no wish of hers had any weight with him, if it tended to make him spend a

guinea more than he could afford. He was certainly then not what is called an *indulgent* husband.

She tried hard sometimes to gratify her taste, but always without success. They had taken a house in York-street, Portman-square, and she very industriously superintended the making of the furniture. It was all put up, and looked very neat and genteel. Unfortunately, there was a hook in the middle of the drawing-room, where a lamp had hung. Nothing would suit Eliza but she must have one there too, and passing Mr. Blade's one day, she saw a small one, just to her mind: she asked the price, and thinking it moderate for so handsome an ornament, she ordered it home, (as they were to have a dinner party,) at an hour she knew Mr. Barrington would be away.

The lamp came, — was put up, — and she waited the result with great anxiety. Sometimes she deprecated her own temerity, at others she thought she surely

might take the liberty of choosing her own drawing-room furniture; — now she thought how angry he would be, and then that she had done right to begin at once, and let him see that she would have some will of her own. — He rapped at the door, — she trembled, — he was not in his best humour, and she determined not to say any thing about it.

In the course of the evening he went, at his own accord, to fetch a book he had left in the drawing-room; and there he was struck with astonishment at the sight of the superb cut glass he saw suspended. He called to her, — when she came — “You have done very wrong,” said he, “in hiring this lustre, it is an expense we can do well without, and which we can very ill afford. Before I married you, I told you plainly and honestly how slender my income had hitherto been, and that I had no reason to depend upon its being materially better, until I was more known — that time may

come, but there is doubt. Meanwhile we will live upon what we can afford : therefore send in the morning to the shop from whence you hired that, and let it be returned. The friends who dine with us to-morrow have each six times our income, and they will not respect us the less, that we do not try to vie with them."

To this calm reasoning, Eliza had nothing to answer, excepting to confess it was theirs, for that she had bought it, and that the man would bring the bill some day that week.

"I am vexed to hear it," said he, coolly, "because your own exposure will be the greater ; but to save you as much mortification as possible, lay the fault upon me ; — say that I do not choose it, but take care that it is away before dinner."

Eliza demurred, — they would not take it back, — every body had lustres ; besides, she had made the furniture at home, and therefore that expense was saved,

and the money might very well be spent in gratifying her wish.

He took up a book,—she endeavoured to get him into an argument about it; but he had given his opinion,—his determination,—and the man was as obstinate as a mule. The note was dispatched to Mr. Blades', and he very handsomely took the lamp back, with merely the expense of the man's time.

The dinner passed well:—Mr. Barrington was a very sensible young man, who had taken great pains with himself,—full of anecdote,—and he told a story inimitably: he loved wit to his heart, but it was tempered with so much prudence, that he never allowed his love of conviviality to take him from his business.

While they were taking their wine, some of the company spoke of the lamented death of Dr. R——, by which event the perpetual curacy of W—— became vacant; and one gentleman asked Mr. Barrington if he had any interest

with the Dean and Chapter of —, in whose gift it was, as he was using all his endeavours to get the acting curate appointed; a young man of high talents and great worth.

The host answered, 'that he only knew one of the minor canons, of whom he would give them an anecdote. — " It had been the invariable custom of that diocese to invite the minor canons to dine at the deanery twice in the year. The very venerable Dean, who had for many years hospitably adhered to this good custom, was preferred to a bishopric, and his successor did not think it necessary to follow so expensive an example, perhaps from ignorance of the rule, possibly from his being cautious of introducing young men to his daughters, and probably he thought it a bad precedent. When he had enjoyed this situation nearly three years, as he was taking a turn one day in the college green, to sharpen his already good appetite, he

met my friend, Mr. Grafton, a minor canon, with whom he entered into conversation, and they walked together.

“ After speaking of the affairs of the Cathedral, the repairs, &c. the Dean suggested the expediency of taking off the enormous weight of lead from the roof, which *might* be too heavy for the walls, and substituting slate. This discussed, he began to speak of the deanery, and amongst other complaints which all men are so willing to find with their own situations, he said that they were so over-run with rats that they could keep nothing from them, and that they were quite at a loss how to get rid of them.

“ ‘ Sir,’ said Mr. Grafton, ‘ I can give you an infallible specific, one that I can recommend so strongly, that I can promise you, if you take my advice, you will certainly free your house from them.’

“ ‘ You don’t say so ! can you indeed !’ exclaimed the delighted Dean, while he

stopped short, wheeled round, and stood eagerly looking in Mr. Grafton's face, that his eyes might assist his ears in taking note of the promised recipe. ' My dear sir, I'm sure I shall be most thankful to you ; — infallible is it ? You do not know how you will oblige me by ridding my house of such a nuisance ! Well, my dear friend, and what must I do ?'

“ ‘ Make minor canons of them, Mr. Dean,’ said my friend, with the gravest countenance in the world ; ‘ make minor canons of them, and I’ll engage you’ll never see one of them at the deanery as long as you live there. But I hear your dinner-bell, so a good appetite, Mr. Dean,’ and away he went, leaving poor Mr. Dean smarting under his lash.”

With this and some other anecdotes, Mr. Barrington highly entertained his guests, and they did not part until a late hour. When they were gone he surprised his wife, by telling her that this must be the last dinner they gave. Eliza stared !

“ If,” said he, “ you could be wise enough to give a good plain dinner ——”

“ That is” (interrupted Eliza, haughtily) “ a joint and a pudding, I suppose : really Mr. Barrington, I do not choose to affront our friends : our dinner yesterday was ——”

“ Much too much,” interrupted he, in his turn : “ in future, a little fish, soup, and a joint of meat, with some tarts, or things of that kind, must be the extent of my table : and those people who do not think this good enough in my house, may stay in their own for me.”

“ Surely, Mr. Barrington, you could not think of giving such a return for the elegant dinners we are invited to,” said Eliza : “ you see ten sorts of wine at the houses we visit, — ices, preserves, and every other luxury.”

“ Therefore, I tell you,” answered Mr. Barrington, “ that such things are no treat to them, and a great inconvenience to me. I shall always endea-

your to have a pleasant society of well-informed persons ; and where people meet agreeable company, that I conceive of much more consequence than luxurious eating, show, or parade — at least such is my opinion ; and my house, and those who are in it, must be regulated by that opinion.”

Arbitrary enough, thought Eliza ; but though the lustre is removed, I'll try to let you know that I have a will as well as you, sir. But she was prudent enough to keep these thoughts to herself, for she was much too good a politician to let the enemy know her intentions.

And to say truth, she tried all manner of ingenious devices, but to no purpose ; he persisted in coolly and steadily adhering to his own opinion ; and neither tears, sighs, or anger, could make the slightest impression. She then thought she would try to put him in a passion ; and if that could be effected, she would readily make her advantage of it.

She used every aggravation to this effect; put herself in a passion in the hope of infecting him, and said — what she had certainly no right to say. But it was all to no purpose, the mule chose his own pace, regardless of whip or spur; and after a world of struggling and irritation on her part, she found herself just where she was — and her impenetrable companion, still more determined and unmanageable. Sorrowfully she was obliged to feel that she must submit — and so she did for the present — but it was with an ill grace, and her eternal opposition only soured him.

At last she resolved, as she could make nothing of him in private, she would try to engage him into a sparring match before his friends: but she had soon reason to repent her imprudence. He contrived, by the keenness of his wit, to give her such a rebuke as made her feel to her finger's end — but of which she

alone felt the edge — and she never again resorted to that expedient.

Meanwhile, though made thoroughly uncomfortable at home, he found himself getting into good business, and that he was applauded by sensible people for his courage in deviating from the usage of his acquaintance, in suiting his table to his finances.

His society became courted : and though some few voted him shabby, and not worth their attention, his acquaintance was as large as his time and his wishes allowed : and as his wife became afraid of showing him the least inattention, or acrimony, before their guests they appeared, and were supposed a very happy couple.

We return now to Eldrington Hall, where Mrs. Trevillyan, her mother, and the lovely little Clara, lived as happily and quietly, as the absence of care, and the enjoyment of health and comfort, could afford. The child was the pet of

her mother and the idol of her grandmother ; and as far, as could be foreseen, she promised to rival her mother in beauty of face and form.

Mrs. Trevillyan had made herself much loved upon her estate : her poorer tenants looked up to her for every thing, but she took great care only to assist the industrious.

The Fanshaws wrote to remind her that four months had already passed of her widowhood, and that they expected she would make her promise good at the end of the other two. She answered that she would, if they would pass six weeks first with her, for the benefit of bathing.

Accordingly, Mr. Fanshaw brought his wife and three children ; but after staying with them two days, he said he must leave them, to superintend some alterations in the grounds at Darlington ; and he “ was glad to have his wife out of the

tears of pleasure stood in her eyes, she exclaimed, “ Oh Clara, come here, come here, only think of it ! ” — and without further ceremony, she took hold of her, and forcibly led her into the room which used to be solely appropriated to Mr. Manshaw’s chemical apparatus, and of which he was extremely fond.

His wife was always delighted at the opportunity of bathing, and he wished, if possible, to gratify her with a surfeit of this much wished-for luxury in his own house. He sent for the architect, whom his father had employed to build the house, and he had introduced him into it, even before his wife’s departure, under pretence of arranging some new furnace in his room, and though he was there for days, she never had the least idea of what was planning. After much consultation, and all sorts of contrivances, it was found, that although baths might be erected in other rooms, there was none nearly so convenient, or which

could admit of finishing them with half the elegance as this.

The architect hardly dared to propose it.

Again and again they surveyed the mansion, and Mr. Fanshaw saw the advantage this room possessed over the others. — Did he hesitate? certainly not, although *he* only could appreciate the sacrifice he was making. — Orders were immediately issued for taking down his beautiful machinery, and putting as much of it up in another apartment as it would admit..

The architect pointed out the inconvenience and deprivation he must submit to, from the want of many of the things which could not be used : — but it was for his wife, and all objection vanished ; — he cheerfully overlooked the workmen as they stripped the favourite room of its philosophical furniture, assisted in replacing it in the other ; and a stranger would have thought, from the

satisfaction and industry with which he worked, that he was hastening something which was to yield himself great gratification.

The baths were fitted up in the most complete style of elegance, and were of different sorts.

Mr. Fanshaw had quietly followed the ladies up stairs, and wishing to indulge himself with their surprise and pleasure, he hid himself in order to observe them.

There was a smell of paint and new stucco, and his wife opened the door of his room, to ascertain whence it proceeded. She was in her dressing-gown, with her hair all down her back. At first she uttered a cry of amazement ; the next minute she stood a perfect statue ; and without examining further, she flew to her friend, as if she wished for the sanction of another, before she herself believed it.

Mrs. Trevillyan was greatly astonished, and as highly gratified, — and she first

found her speech : “ If,” said she, “ our dear Fanshaw had given you baths in any other apartment, I should have thought the attention great, — but nothing very wonderful, as his fortune would allow of it without any deprivation to himself ; — but that he should sacrifice his chief amusement, his absolute delight : for if he was vain of any thing, it was of his chemical knowledge, and this apartment ; and really I have sometimes laughed at the high air of importance he assumes when he mounts his hobby.”

“ Thank you, thank you, Madam Clara,” interrupted Mr. Fanshaw, as he entered from his hiding place.

His wife flew to him, and hid her face in his bosom : “ My dearest Fanshaw ! my most excellent husband ! how shall I thank you ? what shall I say to you ?”

“ Say nothing, my love,” answered

her affectionate husband, as he kissed her ; “ I am at this moment overpaid by the gratification I have afforded you : and besides,” added he, laughing, “ I have had a lesson into the bargain, thanks to your friend there.”

“ Oh,” returned Mrs. Trevillyan, “ I only verified the old proverb ; but to make it up, I will tell you, that when I consider the sacrifice this must have been to you, I feel the full merit of this amiable attention, and I cannot praise you too highly for it.”

“ My dear Clara,” said the happy wife, “ you have just spoken my sentiments ; but my heart is too full to give them utterance.”

They then proceeded to examine the baths, and nothing escaped their admiration : indeed no expense had been spared to render them perfect ; and this was their engagement when the last bell rang for dinner.

The ladies hastened to their toilettes, which were not arranged in the best of all possible order; but the happiness and affection which subsisted in this single-hearted group, “needed not the foreign aid of ornament,” to render them acceptable to each other.

Our widow was now obliged to enter into more society than entirely suited her inclination.

Mr. Fanshaw, though an extremely domestic man, was still expected to keep a good deal of company; and as he was very popular in the neighbourhood, he was much courted.

Sir Henry Lyttleton, and Lord Charles Wentworth, were their frequent guests: both these gentlemen had seen Mrs. Trevillyan at the christening at Darlington, and were each extremely pleased with her; — but then she was in a state of ill health, and very near her confinement; now she was in full bloom and recovered

spirits : her playfulness of manner returned, and her friend thought she had never seen her so charming, or more interesting. She was an object of general attraction, — but it was only to those who were very intimate, that she shone conspicuously.

These gentlemen, who were domesticated at Darlington, felt the full force of her loveliness ; each courted the little Clara, for the sake of the matured one.

Mrs. Trevillyan was now nearly twenty-three years of age ; yet although thus youthful, and possessing full powers of conversation, and of adding her talents to the general amusement, she scrupulously adhered to the rule she had laid down, of entering into no scheme of pleasure during the year of her widowhood, therefore she stayed at home when her friends were obliged to go out. Frequently Sir Henry Lyttleton took these occasions to call ; never having been

told, or not recollecting that the Fanshaws were to be from home ; — but these expedients failed.

Mrs. Trevillyan was always with the children, and did not receive visitors for her friend ; but Sir Henry knew that he had a rival, and wished to have the advantage of the first application ; he therefore sent to request she would see him for five minutes ; and when she granted it, he poured forth a volley of love and adoration at her feet.

Reader, we almost blush for our heroine, she is so unlike other heroines : yet our before-mentioned adherence to truth obliges us to confess that she received a declaration of love without tears, — without blushes, — without embarrassment. She politely thanked him for the compliment of his approbation, but said there was very little probability of her ever marrying again, and certainly none of her entering into any engagement during her mourning.

Sir Henry thought the case not quite desperate ;' begged her forgiveness, and declared his readiness to wait any length of time she exacted, if she would only brighten the prospect, by giving him some hope. But she gave him her definitive answer so calmly, and so unequivocally, that he saw there was no chance of success ; yet while he regretted his dismissal, he could not but admire her total absence of coquetry.

Lord Charles Wentworth frequently *chanced* to meet her in her walks ; but although he gave her no opportunity of discarding him, for he never hinted his admiration of her, he was not likely to be more successful.

Upon her return from her rambles with the children, she always took her leave of him at the entrance of the house. When he found this to be her practice, he contrived to ask her some interesting question just before they reached the

door, or to be playing with Clara, but all to no purpose,—he gained no admittance.

Mr. Fanshaw, one evening, told Mrs. Trevillyan, that he had been listening to her praises, from one whom she little suspected. “What think you,” said he, “of the Honourable T. Courtnay for a lover?”

“Mr. Courtnay!” said Clara; “surely you don’t know what you are saying. I never saw him more than four times, and I don’t think I ever spoke to him, I wonder, Fanshaw, that you should condescend to talk such nonsense.”

“Very likely, Clara,” returned Mr. Fanshaw, “but T. Courtnay will never choose his wife by her powers of elocution; however, don’t be angry with me; I told him, in answer to a question, which appeared very like sounding me, how particular you would be, if ever you married; and that during your mourning it would be highly indelicate for any one to address you: and indeed, Clara,

I cannot gratify your vanity by telling you of his despair or unhappiness on the occasion ; for he gave a whistle, turned on his heel, and took a bet of twenty guineas with a gentleman, whether a crow, which was perched on the next house, would fly north or west.”

At the expiration of the twelve months Mrs. Trevillyan returned to Eldrington, where her friends promised to join her in a fortnight, and where she was soon visited by her mother, her brother, and Mr. Fortescue, who was now in daily expectation of seeing his son and his new daughter, and who therefore was not displeased to be so near the coast.

CHAP. XV.

These degrees have made a pair of steps to marriage.

Old Acquaintance.

WHEN Henry Fortescue left Darlington his friends thought him better, but he had not long been in town ere he again relapsed into low spirits and despondency. He passed two years in England, and his father was grieved to find that his health declined rather than improved, and that he had no zest for the pleasures and amusements which were so acceptable to other young men; and sadly as it went to the old man's heart to part with him, he at last proposed his returning to Malta, for he, as well as all his friends, became

exceedingly anxious to send him where ever his mind could be diverted from himself.

Mr. Fortescue had frequently heard his son speak in terms of the highest praise of Miss Henderson, whose father had been a very old, or at least a very young companion and playfellow of his ; and he had frequently seen Louisa when she visited Miss Mordant during the holidays. It occurred to him, that the sympathy which must result from the mutual dangers and trials they had gone through together, might lead to a more tender attachment ; and as there was no chance of Henry ever marrying the daughter of his choice, he felt that he should be very happy if he would make this connection. But he knew the contradiction of human nature well enough to be aware, that any hint of such a wish in the present state of his mind, would be to frustrate it altogether.

The good old gentleman was greatly

affected at parting with him ; and while he held him in his farewell embrace, he told him he feared he should never live to see him again, and the tears started to his eyes.

Henry felt, as he received the blessing of this kind parent, that there was yet something worth living for, and he promised his absence should not exceed two years. His father made him a very handsome allowance, in return for which, all he required was, that he should make it contribute to his health.

He sailed, intending to travel as much overland as it was possible, considering the war, and as he was a very good Frenchman, and perfectly understood Italian, he thought he might brave the dangers he foresaw. But he had many to encounter which he did not foresee, and was sometimes in great difficulties, for he was frequently so closely examined, that he had twice been in peril of imprisonment ; and perhaps the exertions he

was forced to use, and the stratagems he was obliged to invent, assisted in the recovery of his health.

In England he had nothing to do but to pay, and every thing was provided for him ; here he paid before-hand, and possibly was just mounting the carriage, when it was put under requisition for the removal of troops : — however, by the time he arrived at Malta, one might again recognise the gracefully proportioned figure, and the open, animated, and handsome countenance of Henry Fortescue.

He had been the subject of great anxiety and frequent conversation between Mr. and Miss Henderson ; for the letters they had received from him were of so melancholy a cast, that they began to apprehend he would never recover the exertions he used during the shipwreck ; — much less did they expect to see him in health and spirits. True, indeed, his spirits were not even, but he used all his resolution, and never indulged himself

in brooding over what might depress them.

The evening he reached Malta, he went to Mr. Henderson's, and finding all the doors open, he entered the music-room, being directed there by the voice of Louisa, who was singing an Italian air, which had always been one of his greatest favourites. She did not observe him, but he remarked that she looked very thin and pale, and not nearly so handsome as she used to do.

When she had finished her song, she accidentally looked round, and her eyes rested upon Henry Fortescue; — they were fixed in an absolute stare for a moment, for she appeared to think it was a phantom of her own imagination; but the next he moved, — she rose, and uttering an exclamation of pleasure, flew to him and exclaimed, “My dear Henry Fortescue, is it really yourself? May I believe my eyes?”

Henry kissed her, thinking perhaps

that he was called upon to enlist more than one of her senses, to assure her of his identity; he then asked after her father, who soon joined them, and was nothing behind his daughter in his expressions of pleasure at the return of his favourite;—for, next to that daughter, there was no one he felt so much attached to.

Mr. Henderson was greatly changed; the shock he had so suddenly received of the cruel fate of all his family so overpowered him, that it was supposed, nothing but the appearance of Miss Henderson to refute the horrible assertion of his total loss, had enabled him to support it; and although he exerted himself as much as possible, yet he became indolent and feeble.

He had now realised a small fortune, not enough indeed for what his family had been;—but at present there was only one to provide for, and her wants were so moderate, that she thought their

income might support them in England, the seat of all her anticipations; to go there was the first object, — no, no, not perhaps the *very* first: — but we beg to observe, that the secrets of our fair friends are quite safe in our keeping. It was, however, a principal wish of her heart. She had therefore persuaded her father to commence winding up his concerns; but as this was not the business of a week, she found they must stay twelve months longer before all things could be settled;— in the mean time they were put in train.

Henry had much to learn, much to see; and Louisa remarked with regret, that whenever he spoke of England, or of the first part of the period he passed there, his countenance fell, and nothing but chagrin and mournfulness could be traced in it.

It was not Henry's plan to remain stationary at Malta. The hot months would soon be coming on, and he wished to

avoid them, for he had found them stifling and insupportable ; and as there were here no fine trees, of which one leaf may serve as an umbrella, — nothing but fruit trees and vines to afford shelter, and no fresh evening breezes during that season, as they generally have in hot climates, there was scarcely an European who could stand the excessive heat.

Henry proposed to Mr. Henderson, for himself and his daughter to take a tour with him to Greece and the Ionian Islands. The old gentleman hesitated ; he knew how much Louisa had set her heart upon returning to England, and he feared that a jaunt of that kind would delay that desirable object.

He looked in her countenance, and great was his surprise to observe it quite of the assenting order. He could hardly credit it. He looked again, — there was no mistake ; her face absolutely was turned towards him with a supplicating expression.

“ Well,” thought he to himself, “ there was a song I used to sing in my youth, something about

“ Women’s minds,
 “ Like winter winds,
 “ They turn and change, and a’ that.”

We do not, however, pretend to say that Mr. Henderson was quite so blind as not to suspect the cause of the

“ Turn and change, and a’ that.”

And as a marriage between her and Henry Fortescue was the height of his ambition, he had no desire to thwart it by the slightest obstacle to her wishes ; yet he could not but see that he treated her just as a sister. He was not at all more attentive to her now than formerly ; but he was always her companion, and they were seen so much together, that he thought the intimacy might end as he wished. So he acceded to Henry’s proposal, and Louisa’s implied wish ; and it was arranged that they should set

off in six weeks. And, in the interim, Henry took up his abode at Mr. Henderson's.

Old Mr. Fortescue had written to a correspondent at Malta, begging him to send him frequent accounts of the health of his son ; and earnestly requesting, if he thought the climate disagreed with him, to persuade him to remove to Italy, until he was restored to his natural strength and spirits ; “ for,” added the good old man, “ I do yet hope to embrace my poor boy once more, before I die ; though I am not so selfish as to bring him home until quite recovered. He is now the only anxiety I have in this world, for my other children are all doing as well as my heart can wish.”

Some months afterwards, Mr. Fortescue was gratified with the following answer. After the mercantile, — “ Yours of the twenty-second, received in course,” &c. &c. he proceeded to say, “ I am very happy to inform you, that Mr. Henry

Fortescue is far from requiring the anxiety of his friends. He appears in very good health, gets stouter, and is as handsome a young man as I ever saw ; and, if report speaks truly, you are very likely to have a daughter-in-law. He lives at Mr. Henderson's, and I heard that the marriage was to take place soon ; and yesterday, when he dined with us, he spoke of a proposed tour to the Islands with him and his daughter ; and this, of course, is to be the marriage jaunt. So that by the time you receive this letter, you may congratulate yourself on the acquisition.

“ She is a very excellent, unaffected girl, — greatly admired here, where she has had many offers. Indeed, my own son paid homage to her charms ; but in vain : and I was sorry it was so, for I should have no objection to such a daughter.”

This intelligence put the old gentleman in so much delight, that he sat

down and began writing an account to twenty friends, of his son's recovery and marriage ; and while he was about it, another letter brought by the same fleet, from a different house, mentioned that such a marriage was said to be in agitation ; and this caused him to write twenty more letters.

Henry, too, wrote, and spoke in the highest terms of both Mr. and Miss Henderson. And Mr. Fortescue's hopes once raised, he saw the assurance of it in every line, and he mentally called him a "sly fellow," for not speaking of it.

"No doubt," said the good father, "he means to surprise us ; and if he does, I am sure I will not deprive him of the pleasure." So, when he wrote again, he took especial care never to mention the subject. But, in great kindness, he sent him over a large supply of money, that he might have the power of doing things handsomely.

Meanwhile, the object of all this soli-

citude was preparing every thing for their journey, and considering what might be most conducive to Mr. Henderson's comforts ; nor did he quite overlook those of his daughter. He hired a beautiful vessel ; and having made all the necessary arrangements, they set sail in quest of health and amusement.

While they were taking in provisions at Tenados, they had an opportunity of going over Troy, and exploring the remains of that ancient and renowned city ; but it required all the aid and exuberance of youthful fancy, to find out any thing which could confirm their ideas of the grandeur of that classical ground. However, they amused themselves by calling to each other's memory, the terrible scenes and mighty exploits of the different heroes who are said to have fallen there.—The reader's memory of these events, is doubtless too good to need any refreshment.

The next day, they entered the

Hellespont; and soon after, the view of Constantinople rivetted their attention. That magnificent city, stretching six miles along the shore, and being built upon a declivity, gives to the enchanted beholder, the full view of its grand domes and glittering turrets.

The castle of the seven towers, and of the seraglio, are such immense and superb structures, and so brilliantly ornamented, that the eye is dazzled, and the mind of the spectator lost in amazement. Nor did their admiration cease as they entered the port. Its size, its beauty, and its depth, even to the very shore, allowing the largest ships to come so close as not to require a boat to assist the landing, excited their wonder and delight.

Having introductions to the ambassador, who resides at Pera, one of the four parts which form this enormous capital, (for in the absolute city of Constantinople no stranger is allowed to dwell,) they

hastened there, and were received with every mark of attention by Sir Robert and Lady Liston. And to the kindness and excellence of their estimable chaplain, who was indefatigable in their service, they owed the sight of many places, from which, but for his extreme attention, they would have been excluded.

Our travellers were disappointed (after the magnificence of the first *coup d'œil*,) that the houses bore no proportion to the grandeur of the public buildings. The dirty, narrow streets, and the projecting upper stories, all built of wood, form a striking contrast with their mosques.

It was a principal wish to view the seraglio ; but they were only allowed to go as far as the second court, and that was an indulgence. They found it built on a point of land jutting out into the sea, nearly four miles in compass, and surrounded with high grey-stone walls. But it did not repay their curiosity.

The interior appeared to consist of irregular dirty houses, or rather a collection of old castles ; but from these issued small gilded spires, which are seen rising over the rest, and which give a very imposing idea of the magnificence within. The gardens are very spacious.

Having passed two days in this city, our travellers once more took to their vessel. Their curiosity would have led them much further, but the climate deterred them. Hitherto the air had been singularly clear and temperate ; but the heat was now great, and they determined to explore Greece. As, however, travelling has been so much the fashion in these later days, we need not attend them on that interesting tour.

During this voyage, Louisa and Henry were necessarily thrown more together than they had been at Malta. And although his affections, on their previous acquaintance, were too deeply engaged to Miss Mordant, to allow him to perceive

what was visible to every one who knew her, — that he was far from indifferent to her; yet now that that veil was withdrawn from his eyes, his modesty was not so great as to blind him to what was so obvious to others:

It was not likely a youth so gifted should be inconvenienced by any violent share of *mauvais-honte*; yet he was so good a dissembler, or set so little store by exterior advantages, that nobody guessed he was sensible of possessing them. And having now entirely lost his languor, and depression of spirits, Miss Henderson thought him more fascinating than ever.

CHAP. XVI.

Of ev'ry care I'd ease thy gen'rous heart,
And, like a friend, I'd bear the heavier part :
To give thee peace each moment I'd employ,
And make thy breast the residence of joy.

POPE.

An Offer of Marriage accepted.

HENRY FORTESCUE and Miss Henderson now very seldom talked of Miss Mordant. We grieve at the inconstancy of men, and women too ; for there had been a time, when Louisa doubted if any other theme would have had the least amusement for him : and she then carefully recollected every anecdote she could think of, which might interest him ; but now she, as well as her companion, found other topics ; and she learnt that he really could talk of, and think of another object.

During one of these conversations, he put a most interesting question to Louisa, which overwhelmed her with blushes and confusion: indeed it put her so much on the outside of her reservedness, that she acknowledged he had been dear to her from the first week of their acquaintance. She should not have discovered so much, but no doubt her tongue was like a prisoner escaped from confinement, who, once emancipated, tries how fast he can run.

Henry was enchanted, — and even thought, for the moment, how much misery the knowledge of this affection might have saved him. At night, however, that hour of sober solitary reflection, he began to draw comparisons which no man in his situation has a right to draw:—luckily, however, they were in the region of romance, or rather of love. The soft climate, the enchanting scenery, the melting airs, which every peasant knew how to sing, all aided the

growth of affection in two amiable bosoms which appeared deserving of each other.

Mr. Henderson now saw their attachment was mutual, and he marked it with unfeigned pleasure. He felt that he was not long for this life; for though benefited by the change of air and scene, he was not materially better; and to leave her the wife of Henry Fortescue, gratified every wish of his heart. When Henry, therefore, asked his consent, it was instantly and joyfully granted. But ever alive to the happiness of his beloved daughter, he desired him thoroughly to examine his heart and affections, whether they were sufficiently weaned from his first engagement to allow him to offer them undivided to his child.

Henry answered, that although he never could love any woman as he had loved Miss Mordant, yet as Louisa was thoroughly aware of this, and as Clara was

removed from him by an impenetrable barrier, there could exist no cause why he should not make a good husband to another woman; that Miss Henderson was so truly amiable, that when once married, she would never be in danger of losing her husband's affections.

“ Well, well, young man,” said the happy father, “ settle it between yourselves, — I give you my consent with all my heart, — make Louisa happy, and my blessing shall always attend you, But hark ye,” added he, “ I should like the marriage should have the sanction of my old friend your father: an event of this kind cannot have too many blessings bestowed upon it. If I was well enough, we would all go to England together; though my business must be wound up before I can well do that, — so write.”

He then told him what he was worth, and which would be Louisa's at his death.

Henry said his father was rich, and that money could be no object to him.

“ That may be ; and it’s all very fine talking for lovers,” answered the old man ; “ but fathers are sometimes impertinent enough to expect to be consulted on these occasions. I confess I don’t think I should have been very much satisfied if my daughter had married even you without my leave, — so you must just wait till his consent comes.”

Henry thought the delay unnecessary, but he wrote as he was desired ; and told his father that, knowing his indulgent generosity, he requested him to confirm the settlement he had already proposed to Mr. Henderson, who had signified his thorough approbation of them, and that the ceremony would wait his answer.

Old Mr. Fortescue received this letter about a month after Mr. Trevillyan’s funeral. There were no ships to return to Malta for at least six weeks : — he was vexed his son had waited for his consent, and perhaps he was vexed that he had ever urged him to leave home,

now there was no obstacle to his marrying Clara.

He consulted Charles Mordant, and showed him all Henry's letters, from which they deduced such evidence of his having transferred his affections, and committed himself with Miss Henderson, that even if he were inclined, he could not in honour break off the engagement. Therefore it was determined his constancy should be no more tried, and that his friends should not mention any thing of the Eldrington events until they heard of his marriage.

The old gentleman, then, returned his sanction to the terms of settlement, his sincere wish for the happiness of his son and daughter-in-law, and his vexation at their having delayed it; for by the accounts he had before received, he had flattered himself they were on their voyage home.

Henry received this letter on their return to Malta, and he was astonished

from whom those accounts could have been sent his father, and what was meant by the letters of congratulation he received from various friends upon his marriage, which was supposed to have taken place long before.

However, he showed his father's answer to Mr. Henderson, and all his scruples satisfied, the ceremony was settled for the next week.

The old gentleman now appeared in as much haste for the match as he was before for the delay of waiting for Mr. Fortescue's consent ;—he seemed as if he had acquired new energy, and absolutely sat up most part of a night in forwarding the writings ; he then retired to his chamber in great spirits.

In the morning, however, Miss Henderson was awoke from very pleasing dreams by a faint sound of her father's bell. She lay for some time, thinking it might be imagination, it was not repeated : but she was not satisfied, —

she rose, and gently tapped at his door, — she was answered by a groan. She quickly entered, and found him in extreme pain. The gout, which had been flying about him, had attacked his stomach; medical assistance was instantly procured, and he was for the time relieved: but he was so feeble from the seizure, that his intellects were gone, and he required constant attention for seven weeks, during which his daughter only left his bed-side for the necessary repose which might enable her to go through her duties to him during the day.

At the end of this time, he was seized with the same complaint, and being now much reduced, he sunk under it, and went to join his wife and his Amelia in a better world.

Miss Henderson severely felt her loss, for she loved him affectionately; and not even the kind attentions of her lover, who had watched the pillow of her

father with her, could for a length of time reconcile her to his death ; and when he urged her forlorn state as a reason for their immediate union, she seemed hurt that he could suppose her capable of paying so little respect to his memory, as to throw off her mourning for a bridal dress.

It was in vain he argued, that by marrying him now, she gave him authority to act in her father's concerns, which must be wound up before they could go to England. She was deaf to all his reasonings, and absolutely refused to listen to his entreaties.

Henry, although he would possibly have admired this conduct in another woman, where he was not the lover, thought she carried her respect a great deal too far, and began again to make his abominable comparisons ; and in this mood he was, when the next English fleet arrived. He had a second edition, corrected and revised, of congratulations,

—and these were as premature as the former.

Listless and out of humour, he impatiently put aside his letters, and began looking over the newspapers. He was beginning to be tired with them, when his eye accidentally was caught by the name of Trevillyan, which had always an attraction for him, even though he hated it, and he read the account of his death:—he put down the paper and hastily tore open his other letters,—they mentioned the event, not at all as applying to him, but as the news of the day.

Henry Fortescue's affections, though estranged for a time from Miss Mordant, were by no means conquered. He felt shocked and surprised at his own emotion, paced his apartment with considerable agitation, and for a moment heartily regretted his engagement to Miss Henderson. He called himself a fool, and behaved very like one. But these were only the effervescences of his first emo-

tion : his mind was too honourable for him to waver long in his decision ; and his rectitude too great to allow him to sport with the feelings of an amiable woman. His former irritation and impatience subsided, he put up his letters, and then with tolerable calmness went to pay a visit to Miss Henderson : yet conscious of his own weakness, he wished the struggle to be as short as possible ; he therefore was so earnest in his solicitations, that he gained her consent to be his at the end of the month.

In the meantime the settlement of Mr. Henderson's affairs was rapidly proceeding.

Three days after this arrangement, she sent for him in great haste : he was from home, and did not return for two hours, but then he immediately went to her. She received him with a pale and agitated countenance, and her whole frame seemed disordered. " My dear Henry," said she, with as much calmness

as she could assume, "here is a letter which concerns you, read it, and we will then talk it over."

It was from a distant female relation, and after offering many congratulations, and wishes of that felicity which, alas! falls to the lot of few, she added, "You have just secured the prize in time, for I learnt that Mr. Trevillyan, the husband of Miss Mordant, died last week, after having, as report goes, behaved with great brutality to his amiable wife: but they say he died penitent, and that she feels much affliction."

Henry could not entirely command his emotion, but he read the letter with no surprise, and with much less agitation than she expected; for she fixed her eyes on his countenance, as if wishing to penetrate his inmost thoughts. He returned it, and said calmly, "This contains nothing new; Louisa, to me; I could have told it you some days ago."

“ What ! ” said she, “ is it possible you were apprised of the event ? ”

“ Very possible,” returned he. Do you remember the little struggle we had the other day, when you wanted to see a letter yourself, instead of allowing me to read it to you ; that letter contained the intelligence. I was wrong, perhaps, in hiding from you an event, which it was likely you would learn by the public papers ; but I was a fool, for I do confess I had not courage to speak of it.”

“ I well remember it,” said Louisa ; “ it was upon that very day, that you insisted upon fixing our marriage for this month ; and it must have been after you knew of the event.”

“ It was,” answered he, “ but what of that ? ”

“ Generous, excellent Henry ! ” exclaimed she, “ you would then sacrifice your own happiness for mine. I well know and can duly appreciate your self-denial ; and though my task is perhaps

not so trying as yours, yet I am not to be outdone in generosity. • You would marry from motives of honour, while your heart was devoted to another. My dear Henry, this would never do for me, I should be constantly fancying some unkindness; and the slightest word, which might never be meant to offend me, I should construe into a token of repentance of having married me. While a bar was placed between Miss Mordant and yourself, the fondest wish my heart could form was devoted to you: *now* I feel that I could only have a divided affection in return for all mine; therefore go, my dearest Henry, go; be happy, and the knowledge that you are so, and that I have been accessory to that happiness, will recompense me for all that I now suffer.”

Saying this she rose, and was leaving the room; but Henry interrupted her, and used arguments and intreaties that she would not yield to such chimeras;

but all in vain : she had wrought herself up to a degree of generous enthusiasm ; and at that moment, if the sacrifice of her life could have in the slightest degree benefited him, she would not have hesitated an instant. ‘She begged him to leave her, but his turn of the heroics came now, and he told her he would never marry unless she was his wife ; she replied, she would not say as much to him, for no doubt she should, when she saw him happily married, accept of some one else, — and we believe they were equally insincere. He, spite of his assertion, thought it should not be his fault if he did not marry some one else ; and she believed herself too firmly attached to him ever to marry at all.

It is really curious to observe how people will sometimes, for the sake of what *we* call stage effect, say things which their conscience must tell them are not consonant to the very letter of truth.

However, Henry could get no other

promise from the young lady, than that she would consider of it until the next morning, when he was to call for her definitive answer.

He passed a restless night ; and so tumultuous and inconsistent were his thoughts, that at one moment he feared and the next hoped her answer might be in the negative.

A little before the appointed hour he went to receive the decree, and was very much surprised to hear that Miss Henderson had quitted her house, and the servant believed the island, with the lady who had been staying with her since her father's death ; and that they set off an hour after he left her the preceding day ; but a letter was put into his hands, which he received with trepidation, and hastened to his own apartment to read. He had broken the seal in his way, and was just opening the letter, when he perceived, to his great dismay, that his room was occupied by a visitor, who was very coolly sitting there reading a newspaper.

Most likely he wished him some where else, while he welcomed him with a shake of the hand ; but such things must be.

The visitor stayed however, till Henry's patience was nearly exhausted ; but the stupid man took no notice of his evident absence of manner : nor until he had discussed the paper, and given him a full dissertation upon politics, and his private opinion of the inefficiency of the then administration, of which Henry never heard one word, did he think of taking his leave.

At last he found himself alone, and the next moment he had his letter open : he was much affected by reading the following lines.

“ The sense I have, my dear friend, of your noble and generous conduct towards myself, leaves me but one line of proceeding ; and having taken my resolution with a perfect satisfaction of its propriety, nothing can change it. I

do not pretend to hide, that our separation has cost me many a sigh — many a tear ; and I dare say these are not the last I shall shed on the occasion. Hasten to dry them by the information of your marriage with Clara. Do not repeat, that my affection must be light, so readily to resign you to another. Had I loved you less, I should have sacrificed your inclinations for my own ; but I feel that in so doing, I should have been unworthy your affection or my self-approbation ; and wanting these, where would be my happiness ? I shall not return home, till I know that you have sailed for England ; and the moment I hear that you are the husband of Clara, I shall follow you. Write to me, however, before you go. You will not, after what I have asserted, suppose me so weak as to change my determination ; but I shall ever be, with the sincerest regard, your faithful, and I will add affectionate friend,

“ LOUISA HENDERSON.

Henry read the letter many times over : the disinterested generosity of her sentiments, and the declaration of her attachment, softened him even to tears. It was impossible not to love her, and it was well for him that she left no clue to find her. The next day, however, he found his thoughts bent strongly towards England. He well knew that he had always been dear to Clara, that she married to please her friends, and that not until every hope of him was given up by his own relations, could she be brought to listen to other proposals. His father too had been an earnest promoter of the match : possibly had she been happy with Mr. Trevillyan, he would have felt piqued ; but he had himself heard her speak, and certainly neither her words or looks betrayed any tokens of happiness.

There was no vessel to sail for England for some weeks, and this did not suit his impatience, he therefore determined to go to Leghorn, where he might be more fortunate. He devoted the last

hour of his stay at Malta to writing to Miss Henderson.

“ You have outdone me, my charming and dearest friend,” said he, “ in disinterested generosity, for I was certain of finding you an amiable, accomplished, and affectionate wife. With such prospects, where was the merit of not being a villain? But I will not deceive you, Clara Mordant always had, and ever will have, the first place in my heart. It was only when I thought we were separated for ever, that I dared to think I might make another woman happy. Now that that barrier is broken down, and you have so generously released me, I feel that her affections are still mine, and that I should sacrifice her happiness in disobeying you. I go then, dear and excellent Louisa, I go to tell her of your virtues, your disinterestedness, and I intreat you to hasten home to witness that felicity we shall both owe to you. Believe me, with attachment and regard, your faithful friend,
“ HENRY FORTESCUE.”

CHAP. XVII.

The kindest and the happiest pair
Will find occasion to forbear;
And something ev'ry day they live,
To pity and perhaps forgive.

COWPER.

The Finale.

HAVING deposited this letter in the hands of her servant, he set off for Leghorn, and a fortnight after he sailed once more for the land of his fathers.

The winds were tired of buffeting him, so now they left him provokingly quiet: he had a tedious voyage, but at last he landed, without accident or adventure, once again at Portsmouth.

He did not make a *very* long stay at that cleanly place, but ordered a chaise, and drove to Goody White's cottage, where he had before lodged, which stood

by the side of the high road : there he determined to dismiss it, and send some one to the Hall, fearing his sudden appearance, might overpower Mrs. Trevillyan.

At this time she was there, and surrounded by her most dear friends, Mrs. Mordant, and her brother Charles, Mr. and Mrs. Fanshaw, Colonel Desburgh, and Mr. Fortescue and his daughter, who were watching the wind each day, for the expected arrival of Henry and his wife ; and he had been the preceding day to Portsmouth to ascertain the probability of ships arriving : there were none expected from Malta, and the old gentleman became quite fretful.

Nothing could be more united and more charming than the domestic group at the Hall ; they loved each other with great affection, and appeared to have but one heart amongst them.

Young Desburgh was the delight of

them all, and particularly of his father, who was teaching him all the difficult words of military tactics ; and it was their great amusement to hear him blunder them out.

The Colonel and Mr. Fortescue found great pleasure in the society of each other ; they were neither of them quite so alert as the “ young ones,” and therefore generally kept together.

It was a glowing autumnal evening, when Mr. Fanshaw was driving out these gentlemen, his wife and Mrs. Mordant in his landau, which was open, and young Mordant was beside him on the dicky. They observed a post-chaise and four stopping before the door of a small cottage, and a gentleman alight and enter the house.

“ I should like, of all things in the world,” said Charles Mordant, “ to know who that hero was to visit in that cottage. I wish you would let me down, that I might reconnoitre.”

“ If you expect to find any thing young or handsome in it,” returned Mr. Fanshaw, “ I believe you will be disappointed ; that cottage is inhabited by a hard-working couple, who have certainly no pretensions that way. It was there Henry Fortescue took up his abode when he was in this country ; and from whence so much evil has resulted : though after all, I think it is just as well as it is ; and if we can once persuade Clara to accept of Lord Charles, I am sure of her future happiness, for a worthier fellow does not exist. I wish you would assist me, Charles : you have great weight, and I think she would be guided by your judgment. As for Sir Henry he was soon discouraged, but my friend is sincerely attached to her.”

Mr. Fanshaw had walked his horses, and they had just come to the road opposite the cottage, and must soon pass the empty chaise, upon which was written Portsmouth.

They saw the gentleman coming out of the cottage, followed by Goody White and her spouse, who were bowing and courtesying, and loudly thanking him ; while the post-boys were mounting their horses to proceed to the next town.

The gentleman evidently wished to be unnoticed, and for that purpose was turning again into the cottage ; but Goody White had seen Mr. Fanshaw's carriage, and that gentleman had frequently called to chat with her about the stranger, who pretended to be a sailor, on which subject so many subsequent enquiries had been made. She had told her story so often, that it became quite marvellous at last ; and those who were not let into the secret, might have supposed him a prince in disguise :—her bulky figure, therefore, hastening towards the carriage, prevented his return to the cottage. She, however, made her way past him, and came courtesying to

Mr. Fanshaw, and this was a good excuse for stopping the carriage.

At that moment Mrs. Fanshaw cast her eyes on the stranger, and instantly recognised him. Her surprise threw her off her guard, and she exclaimed, "If ever I saw Henry Fortescue, there he is."

"Who! what!" said the old gentleman, "what did you say of Henry Fortescue?"

"Mrs. Fanshaw said right, my dearest father," said Henry, while he quickly opened the door of the carriage, and folded his venerable parent in his arms, "but I wished not to surprise you so suddenly. I have been making myself master of the news of Eldrington, and intended to walk there, and make interest with John Harding, of whom I have heard so much, to contrive the meeting."

The party instantly alighted, and joy brightened every countenance, while each asked twenty questions together: but

Henry's enquiring eyes were not satisfied, and he looked as if he had only half his share of gratification.

" Clara stayed at home with your sister, my dear Henry," said Mrs. Fanshaw, well understanding his look, " for she expected a lady to call at the Hall."

" Well, my dearest boy," said Mr. Fortescue, " but where have you left your wife ?"

" Aye, Henry, very true, where is she ?" said Mr. Fanshaw, " if she is within a drive, we'll go and fetch her."

" Fair and softly, if you please, gentlemen," returned Henry, " you have married me three times over already, and now by your leave I'm come home to marry myself."

" Blessed be God !" ejaculated old Mr. Fortescue, while his action denoted the fervor of his feelings; " blessed be God ! then I shall have my own dear daughter, my darling Clara, to be the blessing of my age."

Mrs. Mordant said nothing ; but she

separated herself a little way from the group, and mentally offered her tribute of thanksgiving for the approaching happiness of her daughter, which was peculiarly welcome to her, as she had always accused herself of frustrating it in the first instance.

The party walked great part of the road home, but just as they arrived within sight of the house, they mounted the carriage, leaving Charles Mordant, and his newly arrived friend, to walk by a circuitous path, while they were to drive quick, and prepare Mrs. Trevillyan for her unexpected guest. But she was not to be found, for she, with Miss Fortescue, had walked part of the way back with their visitor, and had just separated from her, when Felix, spying Charles Mordant at a distance, set up his bark, and scampered off to meet his favourite. This called the attention of his mistress; and her heart beat quick as she saw the elegant figure of Henry Fortescue.

He was, too far off to be recognised by his sister, but Clara could not be deceived. His lineaments were much too strongly engraven on her memory for her to mistake him ; and though stouter than ever she remembered him, the alteration did not strike her.

She turned extremely pale, and leant trembling on the arm of Miss Fortescue. She felt something like anger that he should so immediately make her house his first abode, without the propriety of sending to ask if his visit would be desirable ; — it was an indelicacy she did not expect from Henry Fortescue. How much he must be changed ! and how much marriage alters a man ! she knew the time when he would not have done such a thing for worlds ! Still, however altered, however intruding, he was Henry Fortescue, and her heart acknowledged him.

Miss Fortescue observing her sudden alteration of countenance, and her agita-

tion, and not having seen the cause, asked her if she was well ; and then following the steady direction of her eye, which did not partake of the general emotion of her frame, she saw the strangers.

Charles and Henry finding themselves known, hastened to the ladies, and it is very difficult to say which bosom was the most tumultuous, Henry's or Clara's.

Miss Fortescue uttered an exclamation of joy, and in the next moment was in her brother's arms.

Mrs. Trevillyan stood motionless, she could hardly support herself.

Henry shook off his sister, and darted forward ; and before she had time to recollect herself, Clara found herself closely pressed to that affectionate heart, which had so long been faithful to her ; and we fear we must, however unwillingly, record, that she felt, we were almost going to say returned, the first kiss which had pressed her widowed lips with affec-

tionate warmth, while some very lover-like expressions of rapture escaped those of her companion. She soon, however, recovered her self-possession, and the idea of his belonging to another, gave her force to withdraw herself from his embrace ; and her next emotion was that of severe reproach to herself, for yielding to the strength of her feelings, by which, no doubt, she had encouraged his audacity.

He saw the instant change of her manner and countenance, and being well used to read every thought of her ingenuous mind, he soon made himself master of her present sentiments ; and he again caught her to his bosom.

She resisted him in some displeasure, and turned to look for her brother and Miss Fortescue, both as a protection against her own weakness, and to hide her agitation from the object of it ; but they had walked quickly away in another di-

rection, and were soon hid from their view by a thick plantation.

Henry well knew every path, every turning in the pleasure grounds, for many a night had he traversed them.

Mrs. Trevillyan trembled violently ; and it was with evident reluctance she was obliged to lean on Henry for support.

“ What ! ” said he, in the softest tone of endearment, “ is it so unwillingly you lean upon that arm, that you are pressed to that bosom where you reign so exclusively ? ”

“ Mr. Fortescue,” said she, with great dignity, “ do you come to insult me, and triumph over my weakness, for the poor gratification of your vanity ? The Henry Fortescue who was so dear to me, would have been too tender of my feelings to use such language as this in your situation.”

“ My dearest Clara,” said he, “ I am, I will ever be your own, the same who was ‘ so dear to you,’ and who will be

as careful of your happiness, of your feelings,—aye, much more so than of his own.”

“ Good God, Henry! what is it you say? Is it indeed possible that you are not engaged, if not already married?” exclaimed Clara, while the expression of her beautiful countenance evinced how much her happiness depended upon his answer.

“ Never, never, my dearest Clara,” returned her delighted lover; “ never have I, and never will I plight my faith at the altar to any but you.”

He then led her to a seat, and informed her of all that had befallen him; hiding nothing of his engagement with Miss Henderson, or of that young lady’s generous and disinterested conduct. Tears of grateful pleasure fell fast from the soft eyes of Clara, as she acknowledged that she had never known happiness since the hour of his supposed loss, until this moment; and that she

had dreaded the time when the information of his marriage with another should reach her.

In this unreserved conversation did this amiable pair interest themselves, until the darkness warned them of the time. Mrs. Trevillyan rose and proposed to her enchanted companion to go home.

The society at the Hall were anxiously looking out for them, and Mrs. Mordant became fearful, lest her daughter should take cold; but hardships, and difficulties and dangers, which would be the death of people in ordinary life, are easily and readily borne upon extraordinary occasions, where the heart is much interested. Mrs. Trevillyan felt no cold either *in* or *ex-ternally*, and she returned to the house, where she left Henry to join the company, while she went to her dressing-room.

As yet none of the group in the drawing-room had been able to account for his single state; many were the suppositions, but as no one could devise any thing which did not in some degree impeach

Henry's honour, and as they all believed that to be immaculate, they forbore to guess farther, and he amused them that evening with the account which he had just been giving to Clara ; — not quite perhaps with the same interest or the same language ; but they separated at a late hour, each thoroughly satisfied.

The next morning Mrs. Trevillyan had the happiness of seeing from the window her lovely child at high romps with Henry Fortescue and Felix. When he saw her in the breakfast parlour, he went into the house, and, contrary to law, brought the child into the room with him. The sweet little girl hesitated to transgress the well-known rule. Most of the party had assembled, and she, standing just within the door, dropped her little courtsey, and putting up her hands said, “ Pray, mammâ, may Clara come in ? ” The loveliness of the infant, the grace of the action, and the animation of her countenance, which bore a strong resemblance to that of her mother,

quite captivated Henry Fortescue ; he caught her up in his arms, and kissing her, said, “ In future, my darling child, these pretty supplications must be made to papa as well as to mamma :” so saying, he brought her forward to salute the company, while he was quite gratified in remarking the satisfaction that beamed in the eye of her fond mother, which seemed imploring a blessing on him for his ready adoption of her child.

Colonel Desburgh, who, though less personally concerned in these passing events than any of the party, was not therefore the least interested ; his benevolent heart was always keenly alive to deeds of honour and generosity. When he retired to rest the preceding evening his prayer was longer than usual, for it included supplications for the happiness of the pair who had known so many afflictions, and blessings for the young lady who had so disinterestedly given up her claim to Henry.

Old Mr. Fortescue, whose feelings were not so acute as the Colonel's, was as happy as he could wish.

Mrs. Trevillyan wrote a pressing invitation to Miss Henderson, to join them as soon as possible at the Hall, which was made, by her disinterested generosity, the home of happiness. A fortnight afterwards Mr. Reynolds was invited to perform the ceremony which united this amiable pair, and never was it performed under more favourable auspices. They were much pleased to receive early in the spring Miss Henderson ; in whom Charles Mordant gladly recognised an old play-mate, now grown into a very handsome young woman.

They soon appeared to take a mutual pleasure in bringing to each other's recollection their juvenile scenes, at least we suppose that must have been the subject of conversation during their long walks and frequent absences together.

John Harding, who had been a great

comfort to his mistress, was once more promoted. He took the entire management of the estate under the title of steward, and so well and so leniently did he use his authority, that the rents were not decreased, and the tenants prospered. He had a very pretty house allotted him, and he became quite the gentleman.

The latest accounts we have of the Barlow family, are that Mrs. Samuel tells her stories just as well as ever, but that they are now of a higher description, more according with the society she keeps. Her son still carries on the oil-trade, but in the wholesale line; and by paying attention to the advice of Mr. John Barlow, they had acquired a very large fortune: both he and Miss Susan (no longer *Suky*) were well married.

Lady Ncerdowel became a widow. Sir John's visit to the King's Bench was much longer than he wished. His wife frequently sent him money, but, alas! this was a solitary instance of kindness or

attachment; not one of his numerous friends who were devoted to him in his prosperous days ever came near him. Alone, dejected and forlorn, without the means of amusement, his spirits sunk and his health failed; and the only comfort he had, was from the kindness of his wife, who spared every unnecessary expense to send him medical aid, and every comfort his wretched situation allowed; but he did not need them long: — he died a melancholy example of early depravity.

We have lately heard that there is no danger of the Eldrington estate leaving the house of Fortescue for generations, let the entail be ever so strict.

THE END.

